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ABSTRACT

Fifty-three papers are included in this proceedings. They include: "Power, Peers and Professional Development" (Armstrong, Zukas); "Invent Your Future, Reinvent Your Past" (Armstrong); "Managing Learning Organisations" (Barron); "Adult Learning, Cultural Diversity and Ethnoknowledge" (Benn); "Culture of Computer Technology in Education and Research" (Blanchette); "Use of Problem-Based Learning in the Education of Adults in Part-Time Higher Education" (Bowden, Newton); "Open and Flexible Provision" (Calder, McCollum); "Open Learning Workshops" (Cashin); "Knowledge in an Age of Uncertainty" (Chappell); "Combining Arts and Adults" (Chapple); "Stories We Tell Them?" (Chase); "Email Conferencing" (Davis); "Performance, Quality and Community in Adult Community Education" (Emsley); "Changes in British University Adult Education" (Fang); "Historical Perspective on Future Developments and Diversity in British Adult Education" (Fieldhouse); "Diversity and the Quality Debate" (Gardiner); "From Backwater to Mainstream" (Hampton); "Function , Fascination and Facilitation of Reflective Practice in Continuing Professional Education" (Hunt); "Community Educators" (Jarvis, Notley); "European Involvement in the Future of Education of Adults in England and Wales" (Jarvis, Dubelaar); "Different Context: Same Praxis?" (Jones); "Case Study in Postmodern Pedagogy for Graduate Education" (Kasl, Elias); "Working Class Women in Further Education" (Kilminster); "Adults@Learning.net" (McConnell);

"Networked Learning" (McConnell); "Recognising Diversity" (Macdonald); "Futures in the Education of Educators" (Malcolm); "Future for Professional Learning" (Millar, Smith); "Transformation, Multiculturalism, and Community" (Multicultural Inquiry Exchange [MIX]); "Getting to Grips with Barriers to Reflection" (Newton); "Is There a Future for Community in Continuing Education?" (O'Rourke); "Assessing Values" (Patel); "Guidance" (Payne); "Positions of Race and Gender in Adult Continuing Education" (Preece); "Searching for the 'Pluriverse'" (Rose); "Learning the Business of Business" (Schwenke, Schwenke); "Fitness for Purpose in Continuing Professional Education" (Smith); "Local Government Reorganisation" (Spackman, Paul); "Future of University Continuing Education" (Taylor); "Experience Never Ends" (Thomson); "Women in Further Education" (Wallis); "Professional Development and Mentoring for Under-Represented Minority Faculty" (Williams, Crandall); "Can Post-Modern Adults Be Educated? (Wiltsher); and "Should Higher Education for Adults Carry a Health Warning for Their Relationships?" (Wray). (MN)

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Diversity and development: futures in the education of adults

Proceedings of the 26th annual conference University of Leeds, 1996

Edited by Miriam Zukas

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Standing Conference on University Teaching and Research in the Education of Adults

SCUTREA

Diversity and development: futures in the education of adults

Edited by Miriam Zukas

Papers from the 26th Annual Conference
University of Leeds, 2-4 July 1996

Standing Conference on University Teaching and Research in the Education of Adults

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The Standing Conference on University Teaching and Research in the Education of Adults (SCUTREA)

SCUTREA is a forum for all concerned with research into the education of adults and those involved with the development of adult education as a body of knowledge. It began as an organisation with a membership consisting solely of university departments of adult education. SCUTREA now draws upon a broader constituency and welcomes individual and institutional members from across the international educational field. Adult education is a growing and fast changing sector and SCUTREA currently provides a focus for the diverse interests of practitioners and researchers. It is a pivotal point in the adult education world in Britain, and is also linked to organisations in both the North and South, enhancing members' access to international contacts.

The SCUTREA Annual Conference is a major event in the adult education calendar. In addtion, smaller workshops, conferences and seminars are organised throughout the year, often jointly with other national organisations promoting the interests of adult and continuing educaiton research and practice. Members' research and teaching interests are linked through working groups which any member is welcome to join.

The dynamism of SCUTREA is reflected in the publications which have been generated from the working groups and conferences and the organisation has moved into an expansive period during the current decade. The organisation produces a quarterly newsletter, SCOOP, to keep members up to date.

Membership is open to individuals and institutions who are accepted by Council as 'making a contribution to the study of or research into any aspect of learning, education or training in adulthood'.

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Editor's introduction

Miriam Zukas
University of Leeds

This is SCUTREA's twenty-sixth annual conference, and these proceedings (or, perhaps more accurately, precedings) bring together fifty-three formal papers and participative workshops from nearly seventy individuals in thirty institutions spread across five countries. The contributions are diverse both in terms of approach (something which we have encouraged in SCUTREA) and content, reflecting a field which can sometimes appear to have few common concerns. As we noted in our original call for papers[1], we try to use the conference theme to encourage participants to focus on similar issues, regardless of their particular theoretical or disciplinary perspectives and approaches. This year, the success of our appeal for papers and other contributions concerned with futures in the education of adults was almost overwhelming; however, it was tempered with some frustration when a few writers offering promising abstracts refrained from committing themselves in their papers to predictions or speculations about the future. Perhaps this reflects our uncertainty about our collective future - indeed, we may not have one! The planning group who chose the theme of the conference avoided the use of the word 'disintegration' in the conference title, despite its alliterative appeal (we were originally working with the title *Disintegration, diversity and development*) but we were aware that many authors might wish to consider the fragmentation of ideas, communities or, indeed, the field of the education of adults.

In recent years, we have tried to provide a coherent introduction to the themes emerging from the papers. This year, the contributions defy summary! Some authors such as Julia Preece, the Multicultural Inquiry Exchange, Valerie Williams, Sonia Crandall, Roseanne Benn and Amy Rose address the issue of diversity and equality explicitly. Several authors address the issue of 'community' both in terms of training community educators (Christine Jarvis, Martin Notley and Helen Jones) and considering the place of 'community' within the education of adults (Rebecca O'Rourke). Others concentrate on the 'futures' of the title including Richard Taylor and Janice Malcolm, who write about policy issues, and Judith Calder, Anne McCollum, David McConnell and Mike Davis writing about delivery issues. Still others approach the future through the past - either through a life history perspective (Paul Armstrong and Alistair Thomson) or through a considered evaluation of our recent history (Roger Fieldhouse and Xiao Fang).

The 'reflective practitioner' debate continues to dominate with Barry Bright, Pat Fairbrother, Christine Hibbert, Rita Newton and Chit Chai Stuart among the authors joining the discussion. Nod Miller and Richard Edwards turn the tables by considering last year's SCUTREA participants' views of themselves, while Jan Sellers, Pam Coare, Julia Dinsdale and Rena Feld invite this year's participants to join in the reflection. Roseanne Benn and Elisabeth Gerver's session will involve those attending in developing guidelines to promote gender awareness.

The whole process of educating adults is questioned by those focusing on quality issues (Jean Gardiner, Peter Emsley and Russell Smith) and questions of values (Kirit Patel and Sue Kilminster). A further group ask questions about what we teach (Malcolm Chase, Freda Chapple, Chris Wiltsher and Linden West).

So themes do emerge from this disparate collection and we hope that participants will have a chance to engage with ideas and arguments that both confirm and challenge. The proceedings provide an opportunity to read those papers you have not been able to attend (always a problem at such a conference) and we hope you will feel able to take up issues with colleagues well after the conference.

Although SCUTREA exists during the rest of the year and is involved in several initiatives at which such discussion might happen, the annual conference is its raison d'être. Without wishing to imply that the early

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[1] Our call for papers included the following statement from the conference planning group:
'There is a debate about whether or not it is important to have a conference theme, particularly in a field which is changing so rapidly and which brings together so many different perspectives and interests. This year, when issuing its call for papers, the planning group focused on this very diversity, multiplicity and even disagreement within the field of the education of adults. We invited participants to submit proposals for papers which focus on new futures in the education of adults. We suggested that these proposals might consider the future from very different perspectives. They might focus on issues of diversity and equality within the field and the impact these have on future directions; they might take a postmodern stance and focus on the fragmentation of ideas, communities, the field of the education of adults or some other perspective. Perhaps some would consider development within a global setting or at more local levels. We wanted to encourage those working from a historical perspective, those engaged in research projects and those developing their teaching to consider how they might relate their work to the conference theme. We also wanted to encourage policy-oriented papers that looked at the implications of fragmentation, diversity or development for future policy. Finally, we hoped to encourage presenters to relate the issues within the papers to broader theoretical and disciplinary perspectives.'

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annual conferences were badly organised, I believe that SCUTREA has taken its role as a learning organisation much more seriously in more recent years. The whole process of organising the conference is imbued with an implicit culture of learning and, inevitably, unwritten procedures have been developed to maximise learning - these are not always as transparent as we might hope. Taking advantage of my position as this year's conference organiser, editor of these papers and outgoing Chair of SCUTREA, I want to use the rest of the introduction to clarify some of what I believe to be the implicit values that have emerged over the past few years, and to make explicit some of the more difficult issues facing a SCUTREA conference planning group. While many individuals who have participated in the process may disagree with elements of my analysis (including some of this year's planning group), I hope this personal introduction opens up a discussion within SCUTREA about the values and purposes of our annual conference.

Taking part

How does a SCUTREA conference happen? Each year's conference is primarily led by the Conference Secretary who is usually a member of Council and is based in the host institution. The Secretary brings together a group of individuals (sometimes by inviting volunteers and sometimes by nomination) including the SCUTREA officers, to become the conference planning group. The planning role has evolved over the last few years, but the group's main responsibilities are to determine a conference theme, to agree a procedure for selecting presentations, to become anonymous referees for abstracts, to agree the programme and to provide support for the Conference Secretary. The ethos and role of each planning group is, to some extent, determined by the Conference Secretary, but some element of continuity is provided by the officers and long-serving volunteers, together with Council's overview.

One of the features of the SCUTREA conference since the mid-1980s has been our aim to increase conference participation in a whole range of different ways to ensure that individuals have the chance both to present their ideas and to interact with others. The impetus for increased participation has come about for several reasons, not least because we have recognised the significance of being an organisation that is concerned with the education of adults. Organisations like ours have been accused so often in the past of not putting what we supposedly do in the classroom into practice in the conference centre; we know that individuals are much more likely to gain from a learning experience if they have made some intellectual and emotional commitment to such an event - and one way to do this is to present, or to take an active part in discussions. While this participation might be planned in some overall way (Miller 1989), we have veered between maximising participation using whole group events and increasing individual participation within much smaller seminar or presentation groups.

Another rather more instrumental reason for wishing to increase participation (and overtly demonstrating that the conference is anonymously refereed) has been the shadowy presence over the past ten years of the research assessment exercises in Britain which present particular problems for those working in continuing education (more broadly defined). One of SCUTREA's - and indeed the proceedings' - functions has been to provide a forum for those working in a very small field, with few journals, to publish their ideas in a recognised (if somewhat less prestigious) form. We have seen it as our responsibility to ensure that work within the education of adults is thought to be at least as academically respectable as work in other areas of education.

But this lofty ambition to produce highly respectable proceedings does conflict in some ways with SCUTREA's other purpose: that of encouraging would-be researchers and those studying the education of adults to publish for the first time. This is not to say that this group of 'learners' cannot present first-rate sessions and write the best quality articles: more that those entering the process for the first time may have a great deal to gain in terms of what is achievable within the limits of space and time that a conference imposes. And while some members of this group may involve more risk for the editor trying to ensure quality, his or her more experienced colleagues may be equally risky bets when their papers finally emerge from the word processor - a point I discuss later.

Of course, one way to deal with this heterogeneity would be to publish the best contributions to the conference in a set of proceedings afterwards - a method adopted by other disciplines. This would enable comments and ideas raised at the conference to be included in papers and perhaps allow for a more reflective approach. However, this might create both ideological and practical problems. SCUTREA has tried as far as possible to work within both an inclusive and egalitarian framework - and any selection process would, necessarily, be exclusive. Furthermore, the current procedure ensures that colleagues have to produce something by a deadline if they are to be included in the programme, but the problems of post-conference productions are legendary.

Another set of difficulties raised by our current practices has to do with the lack of dialogue from year

to year. Individuals who have not attended in previous years may be unaware of the continuing discussions and debates about particularly topical issues; there have been instances where proposed sessions apparently repeat previous discussions without reference to them and there appears to be little sense of evolving ideas - merely the rehearsal of the same arguments. This was highlighted last year by Paul Armstrong and Paul Garland in their joint session, when they promised to give the definitive critique of national vocational qualifications to deter anyone else repeating the same points yet again at SCUTREA (see Armstrong 1995 and Garland 1995). This year, contributors refer to some two dozen SCUTREA papers from the past few years and it might well be thought that this does not imply much of a continuing dialogue. Of course, individuals may be unable to engage with SCUTREA because they do not have access to previous papers; if this is the case, we hope that our new CD ROM containing the first twenty-six years' proceedings, to be released later this year, will help develop the conversations between annual conferences.

So, within my role as editor, I see the issue of quality emerging in many different ways: partly through disparity between abstracts and finally presented articles, and partly through the missing links between earlier and current presentations. But I also see a problem with the nature of the editor's role, as it currently stands.

What role is the editor supposed to fulfil? Is it purely a matter of bringing together the disparate contributions and producing them in some reasonably consistent document? At one time, this might have been the case. The whole business of production was much more difficult - papers had to be retyped, proofed and reproofed. The editor had to ensure that the organisation could be proud of the standard of our proceedings in a technical sense. But, as new technology enables us to receive our documents from authors in electronic form so that we do not retype, and our instructions to authors (although still disobeyed!) become ever more demanding, requiring consistency of presentation and levels of proof-reading and checking far outstripping our earlier productions, the role of editor has room to change. There is time (just) to absorb the content of papers between the endless attention to missing references and page numbers; there is time to recognise that a writer refuses to address the theme of the conference, or, dare I say it, to realise that in a very few cases a writer has not met the basic minimum standards that we might expect from an academic conference. What should the editor do? At present, we have no space to reject papers once we have accepted abstracts. Should we be building in a second mechanism of refereeing? Should we have the option of asking those whose papers do not meet some minimum criteria to withdraw? Should we allow such individuals to present a seminar to help them develop their ideas, but restrict publication to the abstract? Should we be asking for longer abstracts as AERC are doing from 1997 in some hope that this might enable us to take better decisions?

One of the reasons for raising all these issues is that I think many of us within SCUTREA feel uncomfortable about moving away from an inclusive and welcoming ethos towards one of judgement and restrictiveness. We are used to encouraging others and we do not want to lose this atmosphere from our conference. And yet surely there is a balance between non-judgemental pluralism and harsh dualism (you're okay/you're not okay). I believe we need to continue our search for some agreed evaluative process that encourages colleagues to present their latest research and ideas, but that also enables us to take difficult decisions about standards and quality. One of the most awkward problems for me this year has been how to exclude a particularly poor piece (a problem resolved by the author, fortunately), and I would have welcomed some safeguards within our selection process.

Learning through the process

This year, with the agreement of the planning group, I have attempted to enhance the learning that we hope takes place throughout the process of getting the conference together. For example, where the planning group has felt that an abstract could be accepted, provided it bore some relationship to the conference theme, we have invited resubmissions. In other cases, we have offered advice to authors about the direction their papers might take. We have tried to encourage those presenting papers in the same session to contact each other before the conference to discuss possible synergetic arrangements and themes. At a rather more basic level, we have recognised that many individuals are not trained word-processors and we are returning proofed papers to authors so that they can learn from their errors - this also gives me the chance to give written feedback to those individuals who cannot follow instructions - surely an extension from my teaching role!

Much of the learning will take place outside the formal arrangements for the conference - and we have tried to enhance the opportunities for informal discussions and exchanges through the judicious use of longer breaks than might otherwise appear sensible. Our exclusion of formal plenary sessions might seem strange to many first-time SCUTREA conference goers, but our experience has demonstrated that there are few plenary sessions which are as engaging and fruitful as smaller seminars and workshops. Plenary

sessions may serve the ritualistic purpose of bringing a disparate group together in one room, but they rarely enable individuals to benefit from anyone except those speaking from the platform. And, given the diversity of interests represented in the average SCUTREA conference, the difficulties of choosing a speaker who will interest everyone have been too much for planning groups more determined than ours.

A final learning point emerges from some of our experiences in participating in conferences abroad. I am aware that we are an international conference - many of our participants come with concerns very different to those we face in Britain. I have tried to ensure that everyone takes account of the fact that they are talking to an international audience but this has not always been easy - particularly for British participants. I have tried to replace acronyms with words, but this has not always been possible and, because there are many instances where I have been defeated, I attach a glossary with the most frequently used British acronyms. I hope this helps!

Finally, I hope you enjoy reading this year's conference proceedings which are, as ever, a testament to the energy and originality of colleagues. I will be thanking all those who helped organise the conference at a more appropriate moment, but these proceedings would never have happened without the help of Jaswant Bhavra in the Department of Adult Continuing Education at the University of Leeds. Thank you.

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Glossary of most frequently used acronyms

AE	adult education
CE	continuing education
CVCP	Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals
FEFC	Further Education Funding Council
FEU	Further Education Unit
GNVQ	general national vocational qualification
HEFC	Higher Education Funding Council
LEA	local education authority
NVQ	national vocational qualification
ODL	open and distance learning
OU	Open University
QA	quality assurance
RAE	research assessment exercise
RB	responsible body
TQA	teaching quality assurance
UACE	Universities Association for Continuing Education
UFC	Universities Funding Council
WEA	Workers Educational Association

Power, peers and professional development: the diversity of mutual learning

Paul Armstrong
Birkbeck College

Miriam Zukas
University of Leeds

'Athening'[1] or mentoring as it is known in patriarchal societies, has been used for many years, particularly in what we now call work-based learning: in apprenticeship training, the 'master craftsmen' took responsibility for nurturing and developing the young apprentices; in management training, where new recruits are 'kept an eye on', or where are prepared for particular positions through the 'old boy or girl network'; or 'fast track' support for new graduate entrants into a profession; or for the reintegration of women returners into the workplace.

A literature review shows that the use of mentors is extensive in a wide range of professions, not least those that involve working with people such as nursing and teaching (Butterworth and Faugier 1992; Fields 1991; Dunne and Harvard 1992; Goodlad 1995; Tomlinson 1995; Wilkin 1992). In looking at the professional development of teachers we now see that the role of mentor has largely been institutionalised, particularly in the development of newly qualified teachers, whose work-based learning is supported through the formal recognition of this role. This has entailed the development of training for mentors (Beels and Powell 1994; Thames Valley University 1994). It had been assumed that having many of the characteristics of a 'good' mentor was sufficient to ensure effective mentoring. This is no longer the case. There are two critical aspects that need to be considered: the first is the matching process. A substantial amount of the research on effective mentoring has focused on the relationship between the mentor and the person being mentored (Murray 1991), questions of gender (Shea 1992; Segerman-Peck 1992; Welch 1990; Caldwell and Carter 1993; Luna and Cullen 1993), ethnicity (Collins 1982; UCLA 1991; Whyte 1990; Neumark 1993; Wyche and Frierson 1990), age (Topping and Hill 1995) - or, briefly, dimensions of power in relationships. A rather narrower, but equally valid, interpretation of mentoring than will be assumed in this guide is that of the mentor as a role model, which would argue for the need for a black teacher to be mentored by another black teacher, offering a role model of survival and success; or the need for a woman training for a management role to be mentored by a successful woman manager. As Stalker has shown, women mentoring women in an adult learner-teacher partnership enter a complex relationship filled with contradictions and tensions (Stalker 1996).

The second critical aspect is the recognition of the need to provide a training programme for mentors to improve the chances of the success of a mentoring relationship, taking into account the matching process. At one end of the spectrum this training may be little more than an awareness-raising session of what mentoring is, what an effective mentor needs to do. At the other end, the mentor training might well be integrated into a training and development package that seeks to build on that role awareness to examine the 'teaching' and 'learning' components of that role. Here, we might add a third critical aspect - learning through experience. The research on mentoring invariably points to the mutual learning that takes place between a mentor and the person being mentored, and emphasises the fact that the learning outcomes are rarely one way. This paper focuses on the mutuality of the learning. But we want to go beyond this.

Dictionary definitions of mentoring generally refer to the mentor as being 'experienced'. This appears to be a common characteristic that we would expect from mentors. It is for this reason that it is often assumed that mentors need to be older, or to have been in post longer than the person they are mentoring. Traditional models of mentoring are based on this assumption. The difficulty with the traditional model is that it appears to be contradictory. On the one hand, we have mentors

[1] The role of mentor in professional development, especially in the training of teachers, is not new. Indeed, the origin of the word 'mentor' can be traced back to Greek mythology. Mentor was the name of the person trusted by Odysseus to be the tutor of his household, and the term has come to mean an 'experienced and trusted advisor or guide'. It will not surprise us to learn that the original Mentor, supposedly a wise, all-powerful old man who protected Odysseus's princely son Telemachus, was none other than the goddess Athene in disguise (Stalker 1994). Even though being a goddess gave her access to formidable power in the world of Homer, Athene was judicious in the use of that power. In what might have been a glorious denouement for Mentor the man, when Odysseus and Telemachus confronted their usurpers at the close of *The Odyssey*, Athene the woman did not 'throw all her powers in, to give him victory, but continued to put the strength and courage of both Odysseus and Telemachus on trial, while she herself withdrew, taking the shape of a swallow and darting aloft to perch on the smoky beam of the hall' (Homer, 334).

recognising the mutuality of learning - the idea that they are equal partners in the process of learning; on the other hand, their status as mentors is based on a dimension of inequality: length of experience, age, position in the organisational hierarchy, gender, or ethnicity. We will focus on the notion of unequal access to power, and even power of the mentor over the person being mentored.

Usually the mentor is not only 'superior' in terms of competence or experience, but also the line manager of the person they are mentoring. Among those promoting the traditional model of mentoring there is a diversity of views on this issue. This debate is often couched in terms of the perceived functions of the mentor. For example, if the mentor's task is seen to be to coach new teachers, there will be an assumption that the mentor will not only be 'experienced' but will be competent in teaching themselves. But over and beyond this, they will need also to be able to teach teaching. This is probably less of a problem than in other professional development; for example, we cannot easily assume that an experienced and competent manager will be able to 'teach' management. Coaching skills are therefore important. If, however, the role of the mentor is to 'socialise' the neophyte into the culture of the organisation, then coaching skills may not be required as much as an ability to analyse and communicate the political culture of the organisation, its management structure and so on.

In this study, supported through Continuing Vocational Education funding provided by the Higher Education Funding Council, the aim was to investigate the different assumptions and practices in two certificated training programmes for teachers. The first of these employs what we refer to here as a 'traditional' model of mentoring, insofar as the Certificate in Education (Further Education) organised through the Department of Adult Continuing Education, University of Leeds, requires each student to have a personal mentor. The mentor is expected to provide support and confidential counselling for the student, and to provide guidance on a range of matters encompassing curriculum development, teaching styles and classroom management, as well as to provide support in enabling the student to meet the demands of the course. This may include giving advice on how to deal with institutional and other barriers which prevent the student from succeeding on the course. But it is also seen as an opportunity for the student to reflect on the implications of the course for their teaching, and ways of developing their work programme and their teaching strategies, if appropriate (Newton and Lilley 1990). The second certificated programme is the newly-designed Diploma in Teaching in Adult and Higher Education, offered by Birkbeck College. Although this programme does not discourage the 'traditional' model of mentoring, it attempts to formalise an approach to peer learning support as an integral part of the learning process. Each course participant is expected to be in a mentoring relationship with two others; one of those others will be the participant's mentor, and the participant will be the mentor for another.

The assumptions being made about the mentoring relationship are worth analysing. The experiences that students bring into the programme are inevitably diverse, with the most relevant to do with teaching, specifically in adult, further and higher education. The recognition that participants are both teachers and students is firmly established. In the traditional mode, the relationship is still very much one way: the mentor does something for the person they are mentoring. The research shows how the relationship and its effectiveness can be influenced by a range of factors such as gender, ethnicity, status, and - importantly - mentors' motivation for wanting to (or being required to) take on this support role (Tomlinson 1995; Gladstone 1988). The assumption investigated here is that with peer mentoring this should be less problematic. To begin with, as a course requirement with no exceptions, it should introduce a real sense of a level playing-field (Hansman-Ferguson and Garofolo 1995), and standardise the issue of motivation: mentors do it because it is a course requirement.

But, we hypothesise, participants are motivated to engage in peer mentoring, especially in adult education, because it is an integral part of the learning process; it is part of the learning experience and the experience of learning. The experience of experience in the learning process needs further exploration. The introduction of peer mentoring to the Diploma in Teaching in Adult and Higher Education is not only an important component of the learning strategies, but also an action research project that will require enhanced monitoring and evaluation; we will need not only to check that the matching process and operational procedures are working well, but to discover how learning through experience happens.

We are arguing that mentoring, whether traditional or peer, can be a rewarding and positive experience for both the person being mentored and the mentor. For the person being mentored, perhaps new to teaching or wishing to develop and enhance their teaching skills, the mentoring process can help to, for example, develop understanding and skills, identify areas for further development, recognise and celebrate effective practice and performance, help to

develop an overview of their role and responsibility and a sense of the culture (for the teacher and the organisation). In addition, mentoring may improve self confidence, provide a sense of being supported, reduce the sense of isolation (always a significant feeling in both adult and higher education), whilst providing specific problem-solving support and general professional information and advice. It may even contribute to career enhancement through both advice and sponsorship. From our point of view, we would like to focus on the fact that mentoring as part of the experience of learning should encourage reflection on and through practice. Wilkin sees the key features of mentoring as being prescriptive, informative, supportive, cathartic, but also confronting and catalytic, stressing the importance of theory into practice, and - following Schon - encouraging the view of the mentor as a reflective practitioner (Wilkin 1992). Similarly, Calderhead and Gates (1993) in demonstrating how reflective practice has become a crucial element in the progressive growth of teachers, demonstrate how mentoring can encourage reflective practice among learner teachers.

For the mentors there are mutual benefits in developing their own skills, changing and improving their own performance and practice, developing professional relationships, enhancing peer recognition and thereby improving job satisfaction and assisting career development, again through the encouragement of self reflection.

In learning to teach, there are two mentoring models, but they should not be mutually exclusive. One is learning from watching others teach; and the other is through reflecting on one's own teaching. In traditional mentoring, it is assumed that the significant learning takes place through imitation of a role model. But mentoring is likely to be more than simply offering a role model. Whilst offering a model of good practice is important, this in itself is not sufficient for effective mentoring in our view. Again, there has been a substantial amount of research about how those being mentored learn through imitation, but we would argue for a more active, and critically reflective learning, which means that the person being mentored can learn equally from a mentor's whole range of experiences, including their perception of 'poor' practices. This reminds us of the mutuality of learning that is critical to the mentoring process. An imitative role model does not seem in itself to offer the same possibilities of mutual learning.

In the Diploma in Teaching in Adult and Higher Education, students are not required to observe the mentor's class (that is, to see the 'master' at work), but as mentors to visit the student's class, to assist them to learn through their own experience of teaching. The word reflective is appropriate here, since what appears to be happening is that through feedback the person being mentored is able to reflect on what actually happened during the classroom learning activities, rather than what they retrospectively reconstructed and rationalised. Those observed are also encouraged to document their reflections in order to compare them with those of the mentor. The process begins before entering the classroom, where the mentor and their peer learner mutually agree the focus of what the mentor should observe and give feedback on; the mentor will also take notes and provide a written record after the class. These notes might focus on any number of agreed activities and outcomes, including those that are anticipated and intended as well as those noticed by the mentor that may not have been specified in advance. This helps those being mentored question the taken-for-granted assumptions about the effectiveness of their teaching action, and their effects on the experience of learning. But from the mentor's perspective this challenging of taken-for-grantedness in the classroom is equally stimulating and revitalising for them. As mentors, we need to help students by being willing to explore the teaching they witness, whether it is ours, others or theirs. . This is experienced in preparing for and providing feedback to the person being mentored. In formulating feedback, the mentors draw on their own experiential stock. We realise that 'we need as mentors to help students examine teaching actions and their effects in a systematic and analytical way, partly by illustrating such an approach ourselves', and we do this by carefully examining teaching and identifying hunches and intuitions at work, looking for evidence of alternative possibilities, interpreting and articulating responses to uncertainties out loud, rather than just telling the peer learner what we end up deciding is 'correct'. We can as mentors be both arriving at insights and providing illustrations to peers as to how they may go about doing this themselves, and thereby realising this anew for ourselves. In other words, as mentors we will be modelling reflection and analysis (Tomlinson 1995).

The mentor and the person being mentored must both be prepared to be open and reflect on their experience. They will both need to learn together to be reflective practitioners. As well as the personal characteristics and skills of mentors, the success of a mentoring scheme will also depend on how well peer learners and mentors are matched together. Much of the research undertaken on mentoring, particularly in the Untied States, has reviewed the factors that contribute to effective mentoring or those that seem to inhibit success. In the Diploma in Teaching in

Adult and Higher Education peer mentoring scheme, the training programme investigated a number of dimensions for matching[1]

Given the extensive list, there is unlikely to be an 'ideal' mentor or peer learner available for everybody that needs one. In practice, this means some trading off and prioritisation. So for example, the most important consideration for a peer learner might be to have a mentor of the same gender, which restricts their choice on the other dimensions.

To conclude, in traditional models, the assumption is that mentors provide advice and guidance to 'novices, newcomers or juniors'. It should be clear that in peer mentoring the advice and guidance is between 'equals', with no obvious status differences; their mutual desire for learning will be paramount and any power and influence will be shared and dissipated. Again, in traditional models, the mentor appears to 'pass on experience'. From our perspective, this may suggest a one-way learning process and raises questions as to what experience is that it can be 'passed on'. In peer mentoring, the object will be to independently and mutually explore and reflect on experiences in order to learn through them.

[1] For example, negotiated or imposed; willingness; clarity and coincidence of peer learner and mentor expectations; gender; ethnicity; age; social class; 'special' needs; personality needs; shared values; common or shared interests; geographical proximity/accessibility/availability; absence of other pre-existing relationships (friends, relatives, line management etc.).

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Invent your future, reinvent your past: values, life history research and learning through experience

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Integrity means wholeness.
People who have integrity have **values** that belong with one another.
They make sure to discard those values that are alien to their true **selves**. Their politics, their family life, their friendships, their career judgements are all of a piece and reflect the same moral core.
Those without that cohesive core **disintegrate**.
This challenge to make your life whole applies not only to your values but also to the events of your life.
You don't have control over everything that happens to you, but you do have control over your **interpretation** of what happens to you. Your life is dotted with **experiences** and you choose how to connect the dots.
All stories, including your **life story**, string together separate events. In telling your story to yourself and others, you emphasise some events as crucial links in the **narrative** while neglecting others are irrelevant.
It is in the **telling and remembering** that events gain their significance - you can amplify or reduce the significance of anything that happens to you by altering your attitude toward it. You've marched down many blind alleys and put your heart into projects that now seem useless to you, but you don't have to see it that way. Your life isn't a straight line - no one's is.
The **twists and turns** got you to where you are now, and there will be many more zigs and zags to come.
A thriving life is a complex story with subplots, digressions, and surprises.
View your life as an **expedition** rather than a series of aimless meanderings.
(Halberstam 1993, 196-197; *emphases added*)

This paper seeks to reinterpret a series of aimless meanderings into an expedition. It begins and ends with integrity. The advantage of this is that the journey can begin afresh from this moment on. The disadvantage of this is that this journey has already begun. It cannot continue until steps have been retraced and the past reinvented to cohere with the present and be integral with the future. How far back do I need to go? There is no one who can say with any certainty, except me, myself. The life story is mine over which I have control, the narrative is for me to construct, and - if I choose - to reconstruct. As many times as I need to get closer to integrity, to make the picture whole, to make meaningful those aimless meanderings. The story can no longer be part of a grand narrative, that heroic struggle, the socialist transformation of capitalism. It is a selection from history. The past is not fixed, immutable or invariable, but is continuously constructed and reconstructed (Berger 1966).

> Stories ... provide a vehicle through which individuals can build up and communicate the complexity of their lives .. stories are pre-eminently ways of relating individuals and events to social contexts, ways of weaving personal experiences into their social fabric. .. stories provide a vehicle through which the existence and experience of inequality can be explored ... stories do not demand that experiences and activities assume an object form. Instead, stories illuminate the dynamic quality of experience, being themselves a process by which individuals make sense of past events and present circumstances. (Graham 1982, 13-14)

> Stories ... may constitute as well as represent reality. (West 1995, 190)

The past exudes legend: one can't make
pure clay of time's mud.
There is no life that can be recaptured
wholly, as it was.
Which is to say that all biography is
ultimately fiction.
Bernard Malamud in Dubin's Lives, 1979,
p. 20

My problem is that I am not frightfully interested in anything, except myself. And of all forms of fiction, autobiography is the most gratuitous.
Tom Stoppard in *Lord Malquist and Mr Moon*, 1966, Part 2

***Autobiography:** probably the most respectable form of lying.*
New York Times, 1982
***Biography:** voyeurism embellished with footnotes.*
Robert Skidelsky, 1987

> A 'obiography ... becomes a process of writing the self, of telling the story of the self through a written text and writing the text through a culturally encoded meta-story. It works through a metaphysics of presence, a recounting of a fixed preserved summonbable past (the past made present) by a self who is a real concrete subject and who gives meaning to its life, a meaning which is concretely present (the self as presence) - both the past and the self being representable, knowable and communicable directly and transparently. (Usher 1995, 178)

> The life history technique is grounded in a pragmatist approach to knowledge in which the ultimate test of truth is exper'ence. The life history technique ... (is) concerned with depicting the immediate lived experience as actual members in everyday society grasp them. The experiences shift and change from context to context, and criteria of truth here is the grasping objectively of these lived experiences. (Faraday and Plummer 1979, 779)

> Neither the life of an individual, nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding both. (C. Wright Mills 1970, 3)

Now there's a dialectical twist. This is not new. Peter Berger made this point thirty years ago in *Invitation to Sociology*. The first sociology book that I ever read (in 1968). It would be a feasible story to say that as a result of reading this book I gave up the study of history in favour of sociology. I would believe it. It would fit my sense of self, my identity. I would not need to demonstrate its truth. After all, how could I 're-member' that - there were so many influences at that time? Berger, Luckmann, Mead, and Schultz told me that identity or my self is itself is a social construction. I held on to this but periodically revisited and revised this idea; later on, it was no longer sufficient to see just identity as a social construction, since all reality was. By now it had been re-visioned as a politico-economic construct.

> We ourselves go on interpreting and reinterpreting our own life. .. As we remember the past we reconstruct it in accordance with our present ideas of what is important or not. (Berger 1966, 70).

I cannot be in control over everything that happened to me. I am given a vocabulary of motives, a set of reasons, excuses and justifications, that I can use when called to account. Sociology is, if nothing else, the study of uncertainty. No answers, only more questions. Questions about abstract notions of society and culture. Questions about philosophy and ideology. Questions about social purpose, social change and transformation. Questions about self and society. Sociology was a paradigm shift, a perspective transformation, that required me for the first time to critically reflect on my self in context, and to identify then challenge values that I had assumed. But values are relatively enduring and stable, resistant to change; building blocks of culture (Armstrong 1994).

The study of history is not for giving up. It is not a matter of forgetting the past, but to 're-member' the past in order to critique the present, and to invent the future. But we do need to be able to reflect on historiographical questions. Reconstructing the past is always an ideological practice (Wilson and Melichar 1995, 422). 'We are forced to become more self-reflective about our own interpretative strategies, and open to alternative readings .... We are challenged in the last analysis, to speak clearly about what values we wish to uphold in the present world' (Welton 1993, 143). But it is more than simply upholding values. The study of history is counter-hegemonic practice. We need to

examine what these values look like in our concrete social practices if we are to understand our current practice as adult educators (Wilson and Melichar 1995, 423).

In the 'risk society', the main contradictions and dominant values of the post-industrial society are challenged and changed (Beck 1986)

> *The whole map of Europe has been changed.*
> *The position of countries has been violently altered.*
> *The modes of thought of men, the whole outlook on affairs, the*
> *grouping of parties, all have encountered violent and tremendous changes in the*
> *deluge of the world, but as the deluge subsides and the waters fall short we see the dreary steeples of Fermanagh and Tyrone emerging once again.*
> *The integrity of their quarrel is one of the few institutions that has been*
> *unaltered in the cataclysm which has swept the world.*
> Hansard, 16 February 1922, col. 1270.

Social change; everything must change: it is predictable; it is patterned; it is ordered; it is integral. It is chaos; it is uncertain. The only thing that is certain is that there is no certainty. Without chaos, there is no knowledge; without dismissal of reason, no progress (Feyerband 1988). The times they are a-changing. *And* ... just because everything is different doesn't mean that anything has changed (Hughes and Brecht 1978, 65). Education for a change; education for social change; historical and social transformation as reflexive practice. Progress?

> *Progress is crab-like.*
> (Jean-Paul Sartre).

One-step back, two steps forward. The dialectic of progress (Kumar 1978). Plunder the past but go forward to the 'end of history'?

> We have become so accustomed by now to expect that the future will contain bad news with respect to the health and security of decent, democratic political practices that we have problems recognising good news when it comes, And yet, the good news has come ... in essence, it's incredibly simple . a capitalist paradise as the end of history. (Fukuyama 1989, quoted in Appignanesi and Garratt 1995, 165)

This conclusion is based on the interpretation of the transformation of Eastern Europe and communism, but Fukuyama is not talking about the 'end of history' in a simple chronological sense, but how the economic and the political culture of the late twentieth century will not add anything new to capitalism and liberal democracy in the future (however, long that might be). Just as Hegel saw the French post-revolutionary state as the beginning of the end of the conceptual history of freedom capitalism and liberal democracy have defeated fascism and communism.

Celebrate diversity, relativism, discontinuity and fragmentation. Recognise a plurality of perspectives and relocate social significance in particularised experience.

> The idea that values, experience and knowledge have a potential for most of humanity seems to have evaporated. Therefore concepts such as 'truth' and 'humanity' have lost all but very localised or particularistic significance. Relativism is the primary characteristic of many types of contemporary thought - that there is no truth, no universal values, is the 'new truth' promulgated in celebration of human diversity. (Allman and Wallis 1995, 26)

> In giving value to the different experiences and learning that we engage in, we are in essence saying there is no single point of judgement for what is right or wrong in learning; it will depend on the site a person occupies in the social formation and the sense a person brings to and takes from it. There is no single ordered view of the world to be imparted, but multiple realities to be experienced. Our knowledge and understanding of history and the present are relative and partial, depending on the meanings we take which regulate and construct our experience. (Edwards 1994, 429)

Dewey (1938) assumed that there is an intimate and necessary relation between the processes of actual experience and education. But it depended on a 'correct' idea of experience. There had to be a new theory of experience:

> Now we have the problem of discovering the connection which actually exists within experience between the achievements of the past and the issues of the present. We have the problem of ascertaining how acquaintance with the past may be translated into a potent instrumentality for dealing effectively with the future (Dewey 1938, 23)

But

> The belief that all genuine education comes about through experience does not mean that all experiences are genuine or equally educative. Experience and education cannot be directly equated to each other. For some experiences are miseducative. Any experience is miseducative that has the effect of arresting or distorting the growth of further experience. ... the possibilities of having richer experience in the future are restricted. ... It is not enough to insist on the necessity of experience, nor even of activity in experience. Everything depends upon the *quality* of the experience which is had. (Dewey 1938, 25-27)

So it is not sufficient simply to have an experience in order to learn. Without reflecting on this experience as a practical activity it may be quickly forgotten or its learning potential lost. It is not enough just to do and neither is it enough just to think. Not is it simply enough to do and think. Learning from experience must involve links between the doing and the thinking, according to Kolb (1984). The use of experience is not just a pedagogical device but the means by which the ontological and ethical status of the adult is defined: 'Adult education works with an ethics of personal empowerment and autonomy' (Usher 1992, 201). We need to know what experience is, and whether it can ever be constituted outside social relations and the hierarchies of power? (Brah and Hoy, 1990).

Within humanistic discourse experience is both open and closed. Experience is open in the sense that it is seen as entirely individual-istic and voluntaristic and it is closed because it is seen as definitive. Experience can be accepted as both open and closed:

> Within a postmodernist perspective one finds a distinctive general critique of the individualistic, autonomous subject, the legacy of the Enlightenment which adult education, perhaps more than any other branch of education, seeks to fulfil .. . the strange thing is that adult education by foregrounding experience and experiential learning has itself consistently sought to tear away the mystique and epistemological status of these forms of knowledge and should therefore, find itself at home here. (Usher 1992, 206)

Postmodernism, say Usher and Edwards (1994) with its multiplicity of perspectives and apparent relativism, does not necessarily imply 'irrationality, paralysis of action or an atrophy of will'. It does not inevitably lack an ethical position, but criticises the failure of modernists to generate a morality which does not reflect partial and political interests. Yet, postmodernism is often associated with the celebration of the demise of the ethical: aesthetics replace ethics, which are 'destined for the dustbin of history' (Bauman 1993, 2). If postmodernism succeeds in tearing off the veil or 'mask of illusion', this does not inevitably mean that we shall find beneath it unpatterned, chaotic, fragmentary, incoherent and disintegrated sets of values and ethical principles. After the failure of the modernist project to establish universal moral certainty, we are left with moral dilemmas and unresolved conflicts, but at the same time, we have our moral selves, a moral conscience, which may have been 'anaesthetised, not amputated' (Bauman 1993, 249). Bauman argues that rather than a twilight for values and ethics, these have been emancipated from the false consciousness entailed by modernity, and enables us to deconstruct our biographies, and reconstruct the fragmented episodes of our life histories into a moral integrity.

***Integrity** (inte-griti). 1450. [- Fr. Intégrité or L. Integritas, f. Integer; see INTEGER, -ity.] 1. The condition of having no part or element wanting; unbroken state; material wholeness, completeness,*

entirety. 2. Unimpaired or uncorrupted state; original perfect condition; soundness 1450. 3. a. Innocence, sinlessness - 1678. b. Soundness of moral principle; the character of uncorrupted virtue; uprightness, honesty, sincerity 1548.

Integrate ....
The fragmentary contribution of one being integrated by the fragmentary contributions of others. De Quincey.

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Managing learning organizations: a new role for adult educators?

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Adult educators have in the past hardly demonstrated a particular interest in workplace learning. But as societal and technological change creates a growing awareness of the necessity of life-long learning (Hiemstra 1976) the importance of the workplace as a major theatre of adult education is gradually being realized. Yet it appears that assumptions which adult educators hold about the nature of workplace learning may well be restricting their active involvement in this important field. This paper therefore aims to illustrate the growing disconnection between assumptions about workplace learning and the current reality. In particular, the paper will illustrate how one major development of the 'new economy', namely the learning organization (Senge 1990), urgently needs adult educators in leadership roles.

While some adult educators accept the necessity of workplace education uncritically, others are suspicious or even sceptical of an area which they feel intuitively to be, if not exactly immoral, then at least exploitive. This suspicion and scepticism can in part be traced back to assumptions and beliefs about the purpose of education in the workplace. Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) make explicit much of these assumptions and beliefs in their characterization of a philosophy of adult education for organizational effectiveness. In summary they remark: 'In the private sector, organizational and employee development programs are ultimately aimed at realizing greater profit; in the public sector the aim is enhancing service to the public' (64).

Adult educators' suspicion and scepticism can also be traced back to the manner in which workplace education has traditionally been practiced. Traditional workplace learning can be characterized as the transfer of as little technical knowledge as necessary, with the object of increasing organizational efficiency and reducing waste. This knowledge has always been minimal, and has been conveyed by highly pedagogical methods in formal surroundings by technical experts. This process, born in the Industrial Revolution, has, with the help of the institutionalization of Frederick Taylor's 'scientific management', been very resilient to any kind of change through the years. As such, traditional workplace education can be viewed as having directly contributed to the de-skilling of workers. Indeed Hart (1992) argues that traditional workplace education has helped to create uncritical operatives rather than thinking craftspeople and has been a major force in stripping work of intrinsic content.

Therefore, as a major support system for the maintenance of the economic and social status quo, with its inbuilt systematic inequalities, workplace education has come to be regarded somewhat as the antithesis of education for social transformation. In fact the traditional view of workplace education draws an uncanny resemblance to Freire's (1993) 'banking education', used to maintain establishment's power and ensure that workers remain in their 'culture of silence'.

Yet the above represents an extreme view. It can hardly be argued that workplace education has been characterized by exploitation alone. The nature of workplace learning has indeed been modified by the introduction of new, more human, management practices from the Quality of Working Life movement through Quality circles to the implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM) (Sartoris 1989).

However, although workplace education has become less mechanical and more human, many adult educators argue that the basic tenet of increased efficiency and reduced waste has remained unchanged. It does appear that, for example, has often suffered through implementation with a strict bottom-line mentality. Although W Edwards Deming, the father of TQM, regarded learning as an essential part of the TQM process (Senge, 1992), all too often learning has been interpreted as the formal provision of just as much technically-based skill training as deemed necessary by management. Yet TQM marks an important watershed, since it marks the first significant challenge to hitherto uncritically accepted notions of management in North America (Grant, Shani and Krishnan 1994). Indeed it appears that TQM may well mark the extent to which the traditional model of management can be stretched before a fundamentally new model becomes necessary. In these turbulent times of transition into what Drucker (1995) terms the 'post-capitalist society', accepted notions of management and business are proving no less immune to fundamental change than accepted notions from any other part of life.

The beginnings of a 'paradigm shift' in the North American business world can be witnessed by the proliferation of popular literature expounding new ways to do things in the 'new economy'. In other words, the business world is beginning to realize that in the new economy 'new' work needs 'new' management. The nature of work has indeed changed enormously. Work in the new economy is

very much 'knowledge work' (Drucker 1995). Knowledge work requires workers to learn completely new skills. Also, as knowledge needs to be constantly updated, workers in the new economy need to be actively involved in a continuous process of life-long learning. Since the half-life of knowledge needed for work and life is steadily decreasing, the amount of learning necessary to survive and prosper is steadily on the increase. Consequently, since adults spend a large proportion of their lives at work, the importance of the workplace as a major theatre of adult education can no longer be ignored.

Traditional models of management are not coping well with the management of knowledge work in organizations. The old view of management as directing and controlling work, when applied to knowledge work rapidly leads to organizational paralysis. Because traditional top-down management inhibits the flow of knowledge in an organization, leadership increasingly disconnects from both the real state of the organization itself and the real state of the world outside and, in turbulent times, the organization quickly becomes unable to cope. Attempts to reinforce traditional management through the implementation of downsizing schemes appear to merely accelerate this paralysis (Cascio, 1993).

The mainstay of traditional management, directing and controlling work and workers, is now of limited value since in the new economy knowledge workers need to be free to create and share knowledge. Kiernan (1993) sees the promotion of learning within the organization as the most important element of management in the new economy and predicts that it will replace direction and control by the end of the millennium. This highlights the need for a fundamentally different kind of manager for the new century. As Webber (1993) observes: 'In the knowledge economy, the most important work is conversation - and creating trust is the manager's most important job' (26). Indeed North American business literature is increasingly reflecting a new view of workers as holistic beings, not mere units of production. The accepted separation of 'work' and 'personal life' is beginning to be challenged and for the first time, the idea is advanced that human feelings, so long regarded as out of place at work, may in fact be an important resource in the workplace (Webber, 1993).

With this new more human approach has come also the realization that essentially a very human characteristic, that is, learning, is the only effective means by which organizations can deal with change. In a constantly changing environment, the organization's ability to manage transformational change appears to be directly related to the ability of the organization's members to learn and the ability of the organization to share that learning. It is against this background then that the concept of the learning organization has become the most talked-about subject in North American management today. The learning organization in North America has been largely influenced by Senge (1990), though other notable proponents include Garvin (1993) and Watkins and Marsick (1993). Senge (1990) defines the learning organization as: '... an organization that is continually expanding its capacity to create its future' (14). Garvin (1993) broadens this definition: 'A learning organization is an organization skilled at creating, acquiring and transferring knowledge, and at modifying its behaviour to reflect new knowledge and insights' (79). Watkins and Marsick (1993) define a learning organization as '... one that learns continuously and transforms itself... Learning is a continuous, strategically used process - integrated with, and running parallel to, work' (8).

Essentially the learning organization prospers because of its capability to deal pro-actively with change. The organization builds this capability by encouraging all its members to constantly develop their own learning, while establishing processes and systems whereby this learning can be utilized to the individual's and the organization's benefit. Although it is by no means clear what a learning organization may look like, the power and potential of the concept are difficult to deny.

But the learning organization is not just another management program. The concept represents a fundamental shift in management philosophy. The learning organization challenges accepted ways of doing things in its quest to release innovation and stimulate new learning. It does not support the social status quo, since to unquestioningly accept any established idea is to effectively impede learning potential. To build a learning organization existing power relationships within the organization must be identified and challenged, with the object of creating an egalitarian learning community. The learning organization also embodies social responsibility, arguing that maximization of profit can never on its own be the sole aim of a successful business.

It becomes very clear that the learning organization cannot function on traditional notions of workplace learning. Although formal training still has a role to play in the learning organization, training's role now needs to be redefined along the lines of supporting the forces and methods which favour widespread, spontaneous learning. In this context Watkins and Marsick (1993) point out the pre-eminence of informal, and even incidental (that is, non-purposeful) learning, in the learning

organization. They stress the importance of the team as the vehicle for informal learning and outline the role played by the informal learning strategies of mentoring, coaching and networking.

The learning organization also needs a new kind of learning. Senge (1990) notes that the learning organization needs what he terms generative learning in addition to adaptive learning or learning to cope. Senge's ideas are very much based on Argyris' (1977) concept of single- and double-loop learning. According to Argyris, individuals and organizations engage in single-loop (adaptive) learning when they learn how to put right a mistake they have made. Double-loop (generative) learning, however, only occurs when goals and underlying assumptions are questioned.

For double-loop learning to take place, reflection has to be nurtured, since as Argyris (1977) points out, behavioural norms serve to inhibit double-loop learning. Mezirow's (1991) theory of transformational learning identifies three levels of reflection (content, process and premise). Most organizations, Marsick (1987) argues, can at best encourage content reflection while the learning organization needs reflection at all three of Mezirow's levels. It is only at Mezirow's level of premise reflection that underlying assumptions and beliefs, Senge's (1990) 'mental models', can be challenged, and therefore the most powerful kind of learning released.

However, learning will only occur in a supportive environment (Marsick and Watkins 1990; Watkins and Marsick 1993; Senge 1990). Senge (1990) notes how traditional organizations maintain a culture which inhibits learning. He further notes that many of society's institutions serve to impede what he sees as a natural learning process. In fact in building a supportive environment, the learning organization has to challenge much accepted behaviour, that is, challenge many social norms. Specifically, notions of success and failure must be challenged in order both to learn from experience and to risk new behaviour. Real empowerment, for example, must be practiced to allow innovation and dialogue. Also, since the learning organization does exist apart form its physical and social environment, social and environmental responsibility are embedded in its foundations. In summary then, whereas traditional workplace education was shown to have been driven by a philosophy of education for organizational effectiveness, the promotion of learning in the learning organization exhibits many features of what Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) describe as education for social transformation.

Yet many adult educators view social transformation arising out of industry as somehow suspect. But this has happened before in the process of the Industrial Revolution, such as the social reforms of Cadbury Brothers and Lever Brothers in England or the work of Jakob Fugger in Germany. Seen in this context, social reform emanating from the world of business no longer seems so out of place in the changing times of the post-industrial revolution.

What appears to particularly bother adult educators, however, is the view of the perceived end purpose of workplace learning as making money. North American business's traditional preoccupation with the bottom line has not helped here. But in the new paradigm there is a growing awareness that organizational effectiveness is not best served by a rigid concentration on costs and profit margins, but on the development of the organization's capability. The organization's capability, of course, resides in its employees. Indeed a recent issue of a well-known international consulting organization's client magazine summed up the situation as follows: 'In today's economies, knowledge, not capital assets is the source of wealth' (Bohlin and Brenner 1995, 57). This broadens the scope of adult education in the workplace considerably.

Nevertheless, many adult educators are still more prepared to criticize the learning organization than to investigate it further. Since North American business has a history of saying one thing and doing something else, it is unfortunately all too easy to dismiss the learning organization as management's latest 'flavour of the month' and to doubt the principles behind the movement. A related criticism is to dismiss the learning organization as consisting of a lot of talk without much action. Yet there is a growing body of evidence, for example Watkins and Marsick (1993) and Senge *et al.* (1994), to document both the practical measures which an increasing number of companies are taking in transforming themselves into learning organizations and to expose the underlying principles behind these actions. The learning organization is not a quick fix. It will take time to establish, and may very well not realize its true potential. But one thing is certain: the active involvement of adult educators who know and care about adult learning can only strengthen the concept's integrity.

It is time for adult educators to question their own assumptions about workplace learning. As long as adult educators snub this area, the more open it becomes to manipulation and misinterpretation by those perhaps less principled than adult educators themselves. The learning organization in particular relies on practical adult education of a transformative nature and needs people who understand learning, and are interested in learning, to make it work. The

learning organization represents a challenge to adult educators - it would be sad indeed if adult educators ignored this.

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Adult learning, cultural diversity and ethnoknowledge[1]

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This paper will assume an embracing definition of culture and cultural groups. We will take culture to encompass patterns of meaning, reality, values, actions and decision making that are shared by and within social collectives. Hence cultural groups in our definition will include ethnicity but also class and gender. These cultural issues are, and always have been, of prime concern to adult educators. Adult educators struggle to fight continuing marginalisation through racism, ethnocentrism and gender and understand how the knowledge of these groups, together and separately, are defined as other practices and hence systematically devalued. To promote equity, adult educators try to understand how minoritisation or marginalisation is discursively constituted through professional and personal taken-for-granted beliefs and actions. The liberal pluralism and the ideas of student-centred learning that have been the foundation of adult education can mask how provision inescapably privileges the learning of some at the expense of others. The literature of postmodernism has upset the notions that practice in adult education are founded and depend upon - the individual learner, experience as the source of knowledge and the neutrality of knowledge. Postmodernism emphasises that what counts as knowledge is always an effect of power which conceals as much as it reveals. Our practices have aimed at the eradication of difference and conflict but perhaps conflict and difference are necessary for the basis of change (Rockhill 1995).

Society has increased in cultural diversity and the resultant cultural differences have come to manifest themselves more strongly in education. One of the dominant question in all education provision is how to accommodate difference to enhance education for all. The pressure has mounted for education to reflect the multicultural nature of society and to re-evaluate educational experience in the face of the educational difficulties of many from ethnic minority or working class communities. There is a growing sense that all education needs to be studied in the living contexts which are relevant and meaningful to the learner, no matter what their cultural background.

This paper argues that disciplines must be understood as a kind of cultural knowledge which all cultures generate but which need not necessarily look the same from one cultural group to the other. As all cultural groups generate language, beliefs rituals etc. so they develop subject knowledge, ie all knowledge is a social construct. However not all knowledge is valued. Intellectual racism, sexism and classism in educational institutions have affected the way that knowledge has been perceived, produced and propagated by scholars and academics. Eurocentrism locates the source and subsequent development of all worthwhile knowledge in the historical and geographical space of Europe and its cultural dependencies and both consciously and unconsciously denigrates the knowledge of others. Similarly our patriarchal and hierarchical society has normalised male middle-class knowledge and values and pathologised or ignored that of women and the working class. Stereotypes of able and less able are strongly related to the learner's anticipated ability to achieve particular examinations and learn in particular ways. These preconceptions are in turn related to a variety of cultural assumptions linked to class, race and gender stereotypes (Scott-Hodgetts 1992).

Modernity has tended to dominate education and until recently has implied culture-free education and culture-free knowledge. In the last decade or so, alongside the still dominant scholarly academic disciplines, the existence of ethnoknowledge, practiced by identifiable cultural groups, focused on interest, motivation, codes, jargon and discourse which is not that of the academy, is now acknowledged where 'ethno' is defined to include all culturally identifiable groups with their language (jargon) codes, symbols, myths and specific ways of reasoning and inferring.

This paper will explore the implications of this constructivist theory of knowledge to adult education through a theoretical exploration grounded in an examination of a case study of a particular discipline, here mathematics. Knowledge in academic mathematics is linked to ethnomathematics. New ideas in mathematics appear outside its circle of practitioners, are used and practiced as ethnomathematics and eventually may be recognised, theorised and expropriated as academic mathematics. However sometimes these ideas do not become formalised and the practice continues whilst useful but restricted to the cultural group which originated it. This illustrates the concept of mathematics as a social construct not a structured body of knowledge. It is a set of *ad hoc* practices which evolve as a result of societal change (D'Ambrosio 1991).

[1] This paper is a draft extract of a forthcoming book by Roseanne Benn, *Adults Count Too*, to be published by the National Institute for Adult Continuing Education at the end of 1996.

This raises the question of whether mathematics is culture-free or culture-bound. If it is seen from a formalist perspective as absolute and given, then it is very much received knowledge. Inability to do mathematics can be linked to innate hierarchical abilities and the abstruse nature of the subject itself. If however the view taken is that mathematics is founded in human activity, mathematics is no longer a special case, a peek into the mind of God, but is liable to growth and change within the social context. The social nature of mathematics allows the cultural differences of individuals to be given space and enrich the mathematics curriculum (Benn and Burton 1995). Postmodern philosophers such as Foucault (1986) and Lyotard (1984) argue that the divisions of knowledge disciplines accepted today are modern constructs defined from certain social discourses and where all human knowledge consists of narratives each with its own legitimation criteria. Mathematics is generated by human activity and is interconnected to all human knowledge. It is an outcome of humans and their cultures and hence culture-bound. Mathematics is constructed, as all disciplines are, to help the culture make sense of life and the world and to provide tools for dealing with the full range of human experiences. The purposes may be religious, artistic, practical, technological, study for its own sake etc. Whatever, the mathematics of each culture is based on the values, goals and purposes of that culture. Western academic mathematics is very powerful in our global society but its value can only be seen relative to its own culture. It may be literally useless in another culture. A corollary here is the English language which is very powerful globally but not intrinsically more valuable nor more useful in all contexts than other languages (Ernest 1991).

This has major implications for mathematics education. The attempt to convey ideas and concepts to the learner must take place using the metaphors and imagery available to the learner and these are influenced by the society and culture within which the learner lives. However, the dominant culture always appears, even if implicitly, in the curriculum though it is often invisible to those from that society who assume that such inclusions represent the natural order of things. There is, in addition, a distorted and hidden history of different groups' contribution to mathematics and also methological and conceptual differences. Based on their background, the learner may perform operations or perceive mathematics concepts differently from academic mathematics. The very process of learning academic mathematics may create conflict with the folk processes or ethnomathematics. In a culturally mixed classroom, and by our definition all classrooms must be culturally mixed, it is important that learners feel able to bring their own cultures into the classroom and that these and other cultures are acknowledged and respected (Woodrow 1989).

Nickson (1992) suggests that all educators should endeavour to be aware of the different cognitive styles of their students and that it enriches our teaching to refer to variations in symbolic systems throughout the ages and in different cultures today. This suggests that cultural diversity can be accommodated by utilising adults' background education, their use of mathematics whether through work, leisure or as a citizen, and their experiences of mathematics as members of different cultures eg white middle class women or black working class women. This is to argue that it is not sufficient as adult educators to be aware of general issues facing the adult learner but we also need to be aware of the cultural background of each student at the broader societal level. By taking such considerations into account, alongside of an increased awareness of the ways in which mathematics knowledge can be socially determined, a multicultural mathematics might become more of a reality. It is not sufficient to accommodate the existence of other cultures by eg providing different cultural contexts for problems or discussion of the history of mathematics illustrating its multicultural roots. This is to ignore the different ways of thinking or construing eg Gilligan's two approaches of separated and connected reasoning which she suggests are gender-linked (1982). It may be that cultural differences in cognition reside more in the situations to which particular cognitive processes are applied than in the existence of a process in one cultural group and its absence in another.

An illuminating example of simple arithmetic processes with different cultural resonance is given in this conversation with a university student in Papua New Guinea:

> I asked him how he would find the area of a rectangular piece if paper. He replied:
>
> 'Multiply the length by the width.'
>
> 'You have gardens in your village. How do your people judge the area of their gardens?'
>
> 'By adding the length and width.'
>
> 'Is that difficult to understand?'
>
> 'No, at home I add, at school I multiply.'
>
> 'But they both refer to area.'
>
> 'Yes, but one is about the area of a piece of paper and the other is about a garden.'

> So I drew two (rectangular) gardens on the paper, one bigger than the other.
>
> 'If these two were gardens which would you rather have?'
>
> 'It depends on many things, I cannot say. The soil, the shade...'
>
> 'I was then about to ask the next question,'Yes, but if they had the same soil, shade...', when I realised how silly that would sound in that context. (Bishop 1985)

The cognitive compartmentalisation of the comment 'At home I add, at school I multiply' can be a strength if recognised and valued but a weakness otherwise.

'Others' are often judged to have failed but by the standards of just one group in society. They are victims of the assumption that logic and mathematics have no social preferences. It just so happens that certain sectors of the population ie whites, males and the middle classes are intrinsically better equipped for these forms of study. Their cognitive styles embody the properties described as mathematical or logical styles. The fact that this cause and effect may actually be in reality reversed ie mathematical or logical thinking has been defined as that of male white middle class cognition is often ignored (Ernest 1991).

Many, if not most, adults learning mathematics are confronted with the mathematics of a subculture of which they are not and may not wish to be a member and where there is no cultural resonance between their activities and those they are asked to participate in formal learning. Adult education is based on interaction and depends on the already acquired coping mechanisms brought into education by every adult. To ignore this individual history is not only unproductive, it is to ignore the factors which have built up the individual's personality and basic knowledge. Without this, the images and metaphors for education are unavailable.

Educators need to balance the skills of an ethnomathematics with the power of academic mathematics. Carraher (1991) investigated problem-solving strategies in out-of-school mathematics used by boy street vendors in Brazil and concluded that there are fundamental similarities between their oral ethnomathematics and written academic mathematics. Children who could do mathematics outside school, though showing a great deal of difficulty with school approaches, did demonstrate a knowledge of the fundamental invarients of addition and subtraction. The difficulties they showed when attempting school mathematics related to the deployment and meaning of particular procedures and representations adopted by schools rather than the fundamental arithmetic of addition and subtraction. This work, and other similar research (Saxe 1988; Scribner 1984), seems to shows that different real-life problems place varied demands on individuals and even those with little school mathematics develop an appropriate ethnomathematics to deal with these demands. The major advantage of this mathematics is its meaningfulness, its major liability the limited conditions to which this knowledge may be useful or relevant. Identifiable subgroups or cultures have built up theories-from-practice which can be passed on to others but may not be generalisable by the individual. Academic mathematics on the other hand would seem to be based on theory-to-practice but this also has limitations. For example, students are frequently required to use symbolic representation before they have developed a full understanding of their potential meaning. This may lead to procedural rather than conceptual knowledge.

Different cultures are constituted by different practices, meanings and discourses and individuals are positioned both structurally and individually by their cultures. The transfer between different mathematical discourses is very complex. Adults wishing to learn academic mathematics are wishing to transfer between discourses. In any learning group, there will be individuals from different cultural backgrounds of gender, ethnicity, age, class whatever. The discourse of academic mathematics may not or perhaps cannot be the same as that of work mathematics or home mathematics. Teaching adults mathematics as a process of transfer from each individual's ethnomathematics to academic mathematics whilst still valuing and legitimising the ethnomathematics is clearly no easy task.

Ethnomathematics on their own may not be sufficient for full involvement in our society. Adults wishing to learn mathematics have diverse motivations and goals and, of these, problem solving may be only a small part. Academic mathematics inducts the learner into the game of academic mathematics with its own rules and rewards. As these rewards include the acquisition of qualification for further education or career advancement, the overall goal of the learner may be to learn to play the game rather than to learn mathematics per se. In this case, concentration on ethnomathematics to the exclusion of academic mathematics would be to the detriment of the learner. A curriculum based solely on ethnomathematics would not meet their needs. An appreciation and legitimisation of ethnomathematics would give the images and metaphors required for the transfer from where the

learner is to where they wish to be. However, for genuine empowerment in our society, the learner needs to be able to understand, operate within and, if they wish, criticise the social institution of mathematics.

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Dividing by more than two: shifting paradigms of gender in continuing education research

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Two apparently contradictory tendencies have characterised recent continuing education research. There has been a tidal wave of largely instrumental research on economically and vocationally orientated issues such as accreditation, work-based learning and distance education. In such research, social purpose is rarely prominent and gender has played a subsidiary or invisible role. Where gender is recognised as a variable in this research, its role is rarely theorised. But there has also been a strong undercurrent of socially purposive feminist research, including the development of feminist paradigms of the nature of research, analyses of female perceptions and maps of the under- representation of women in those parts of continuing education perceived as powerful, such as the professoriate and certain forms of continuing professional development. (See for example Benn and Zukas 1993; Brine 1994; Elliott 1995; Gerver and Hart 1991; Gilligan 1982; Malcolm 1992; Tett 1996; Walkerdine 1988).

However, during the 1990s further diversity has emerged. Feminist thought is increasingly shaken by doubts about essentialism. Work on the representation of women as 'other' is being reconsidered in the light of the fragmentation of the concept of woman. In this context, race and class are moving to the front of the agenda. Shifting representations of masculinity - especially in non-vocational or community-based education - are also emerging as areas of study. Meanwhile, work on the under representation of women is being reconsidered in the light of recent changes in the gender balance in the entry to elite professions and in female representation in traditionally male strongholds such as the professoriate and the CVCP. (See for example Benn and Burton 1995; Neville 1994; Zukas forthcoming).

However confusing and changing the scenario, it is clear that gender needs to be firmly on the agenda of CE research. A recent analysis of publications in some of the main outlets for CE research in Britain indicated both an unequal gender representation amongst contributors and a worrying lack of gender awareness in the content of articles (Benn 1995). It would appear a timely and useful exercise to develop a set of guidelines to promote gender awareness in all types of continuing education research and publications.

The aim of the guidelines would be to consider ways of enriching the awareness of gender in research in CE as a whole, informed by the reflective experience of all CE researchers and of researchers in women's studies in particular. The framework for the guidelines could include two main areas: the gender of those involved in research, including researchers and those researched, and the gender implications of the choice of research methods and styles. Questions about research subjects could include the need for explicit collection of cross-tabulated data on male/female and awareness of the differential patterns of male/female lives, including cohort effects, communication preferences and expectations. Queries about the researchers could include the possible effects of their own gender on the research process, whether in the capacity of directing, advising, supervising or conducting the research. Issues concerning the end-users could include their awareness of gender issues, including their involvement in the research process and dissemination of the results. Finally, the appropriateness of chosen methodologies, including an awareness of different feminist research paradigms, could be considered.

The session will be participative. Participants are asked to bring to the workshop examples of what they believe to be good and bad practice in gender awareness in CE research. Participants will first be invited to suggest amendments to the framework outlined above. After an analysis of the examples of gender awareness in CE research, located in the agreed framework, there will be a brainstorming session to develop the questions for the guidelines. The way forward will then be discussed by the group. One suggestion is that draft guidelines, drawn up as a result of the workshop, could subsequently be discussed by the Universities Association for Continuing Education (UACE) Research Sub-committee and the UACE Women and Continuing Education Professional Network. Such draft guidelines could also be presented at the Scottish Gender and Education Research Network annual conference at the University of Dundee on I November 1996. Further suggestions would be welcome. The final version of the guidelines will be published in the book currently being written by the Women and CE Professional Network, *Women and Continuing Education: Reflection in Action.*

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The culture of computer technology in education and research: a Canadian perspective

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Context

Many, if not most people in the world, think of Canada - when they think of it at all - as the cold bit of North America. Unfortunately, the terms 'North America', and more generally 'America' have become synonymous with the United States; and when Canadians attempt to draw a distinction between the two countries, we are often considered to be splitting hairs. This is in spite of the fact that we have experienced very different histories, geographies, politics and cultures (Coe 1988). These differences are frequently overshadowed by the many characteristics the two countries share: a continent, a very high standard of living (for some), a language (more or less), and, perhaps most importantly, a popular culture as presented through the media. One of the reasons Canadians feel it is necessary to both define and defend our cultural identity is that there exists a very real danger of losing it altogether -of becoming, if not politically then culturally, the fifty-first State.

This spectre has been rising over the last thirty years. For a time it appeared that we had come to terms with the need to protect our culture from being entirely eroded by the American publishing, broadcasting and entertainment industries. With the advent of computer technology, however, cultural erosion has again become a threat - one to which we are particularly vulnerable owing to our extensive reliance on computer and communication technologies.

Canadians are 'early adopters' of communication technologies. Why is this? Canada is a very large country, magnified by our very sparse population. Many of our communities are isolated, often accessible only by infrequent and irregular air service. Electronic communication has allowed residents to circumvent the need to rely on more traditional, but less dependable, means of communication. It is this heavy reliance on alternative communications that has left us so vulnerable to US influences.

This situation has not gone unnoticed by the Canadian government agencies. They have established a legislative framework which addresses issues such as ownership, access and infrastructure, and to some extent content but, they have tended to treat technologies as neutral and static. As such, they have not addressed the issues as they relate to computer-mediated technologies (Communications Canada 1992).

These shortcomings are exacerbated by the division of political power and responsibility between the Federal, the ten provincial, and the two (soon to be three) territorial governments. Provincial legislatures enjoy a level of autonomy almost unknown in Europe, and education (with few exceptions) is their responsibility. This is not to say that the federal government has not strongly influenced policy and curriculum. Additional funding has been made available to school districts to support programs that the federal government deemed to be of strategic value - typically Canadian Studies and French language education with special emphasis on Canadian content in textbooks and learning materials.

Language issues

Any discussion of Canadian identity must always be concerned with issues of language. In a Canadian context, we must consider not only the 'language' of communication (English, French, Cree, etc.), but also the 'language' used and the cultural and social biases it reflects. English has become the lingua franca of global communication and nowhere is this more evident than on the Internet. The Internet has gained particular acceptance in Canadian educational and business settings because, unlike other countries, Canadian and US residents are not required to pay transmission fees (at least for the time being). Even when people exchange messages in other languages, there is a tendency to use Latin characters because diacritical marks, for example, can cause transmission problems (Bradsher 1996, Thomas and McDonell 1995).[1] In a country that enjoys as much linguistic diversity as does Canada, such impediments to transmission obviously lead to difficulties.

The two official languages of Canada are English and French. In addition, in areas such as the NorthWest Territories, indigenous languages are also official languages of the governing legislative assemblies. Canada's native populations have been educationally disadvantaged for years (historically, this was also true for our large Francophone population). After suffering from a lack of relevant, culturally appropriate textbooks and audio-visual materials, they now face a lack of relevant, culturally appropriate software. Software producers do provide French language versions of their main commercial releases although there is a delay of many months. There is a greater problem with educational software, the release

[1] The International Standards Organization's (ISO) Latin #1 does support accented characters but less than half of available communications software providers and even fewer transmission services support them (Thomas and McDonell 1995).

of which is dependent on the amount of interest generated in the European market. At best, this can take close to a year (Tu Thanh Ha 1996)

In spite of these problems, computer technology has also led to some unexpected benefits. For example, it has played a role in building Francophone communities, especially learning communities. Francophones outside the province of Quebec often live in remote areas, and in addition, they are often widely separated from each other. Collaboration, however, is central to their cultural norms, and, even when separated by great distances, they tend to easily form groups with others sharing their cultural affiliation (Paquette-Frenette and Larocque, 1995). Computer technologies, such as computer conferencing, that support a collective approach to learning have proven very valuable. In addition to linking isolated learners with others who share their language and cultural values, interactive technologies have enabled education providers to overcome many of the problems associated with small populations.

Another area that has benefited from the application of computer technology is that of post-secondary science education, which suffers from a serious shortage of high quality affordable French language textbooks. Slides or transparencies that can be used as teaching tools are even more scarce. In an attempt to alleviate this situation, the BIODIDAC project was initiated by the University of Ottawa.[1] The objective of the project was to encourage exchange of teaching aids suitable for use in French (and English) biology classes. A digital media bank comprising such teaching tools as text material, drawings, photos, and video has been established, as has an Internet ftp site, a web site and an electronic discussion group where educators can share ideas. (BIODIDAC 1996).[2] This type of co-operative effort has been made possible through the use of computer technology.

As is the case with Francophone education, the application of computer technology to address the learning needs of Canada's First Nations people has had mixed results. Because of their very different cultural norms, computer conferencing has not proved to be successful. Computer conferencing, essentially a conversation in text format between two or more people separated by time and space, meets the norms of both Anglo- and Francophones. Indigenous cultures have very different communicative and learning ethics.

At the risk of generalising across a number of very diverse First Nations, their cultures are essentially oral ones. The process of changing from orality to literacy requires that people change their cognitive processes; essentially, they must learn to think and express themselves using different discourse patterns. A related problem is that the decontextualised nature of learning is alien to traditional ways of learning. The nature of 'talk' in native communities contrasts quite sharply with the value placed upon it in our culture. 'Co-presence' is far more important than talk, and silence is valued very highly for a variety of reasons (Spronk 1995). Neither of these norms is supported by computer technology.

The need to use the English language has a strong impact on linguistic integrity. Where indigenous language retention is an issue of concern, the almost exclusive use of English can be a profoundly negative force. Surprisingly, in this realm, computer technologies have been a valuable tool in native language preservation and renewal. Unlike English or French, the written form of indigenous languages such as Inuit and Cree is based on syllabic characters. With the development of digitised syllabic fonts for word-processing, there has been a sharp increase in the availability of native-language reading materials in the Canadian North. This has been facilitated through the increasing use of binary (graphic) files as opposed to text files. The time and cost required to type, edit, and produce syllabic reading materials has been reduced by about 50 per cent while at the same time accuracy and control in the translation process has increased. The development of Inuktitut spell-checking software has further enhanced the process. Computer technology has helped Inuktitut gain status as a working language, linking native organisations, business, and governments in northern Canada (Stiles 1984).

In addition to the English, French and First Nations languages, the issue is further complicated by the fact that Canada has been officially multi-cultural since 1987. Our multi-cultural policies both encourage and support linguistic diversity. With the rise in the number of new Canadians from Asia, the development of software translation programs in Chinese and Japanese, as well as multi-lingual Internet readers, has received more attention.

Cultural and social biases

English has been referred to as the primary link language of computer technology - with both the technology and the language providing a transparent, neutral vehicle for communication (Bowers 1988, DeStefano 1989). Although English is now spoken by more people as a second language than as a first

[1] The University of Ottawa is one of several bilingual universities across the country. At the University of Alberta, the Faculté Saint-Jean offers undergraduate degree programmes in science, arts, and education as well as a graduate degree in education.

[2] BIODIDAC

ftp site:	ftp://biodidac.bio.uottawa.ca
web site:	http://biodidac.bio.uottawa.ca
e-mail:	biodidac@acadvm1.uottawa.ca

language, does this mean that it is free of cultural values? Is computer technology neutral, or does the language used to speak about technology and to use technology, transmit a culture of technology? Even in a multi-lingual, multicultural country such as Canada, English is an essential asset. Recently, Tele-Université contracted with Athabasca University[1] to provide an English certification program primarily for people working with computer technology. It is interesting to note that this program includes a cultural and social values component. Why, if English is 'culturally neutral', should such a component be deemed necessary?

Wittgenstein (Postman 1992) expresses the view that language is not only a vehicle of thought but also the driver of thought: values are reflected in the way language is used. Or, in the oft-repeated words of one of Canada's most well-known communications experts, Marshall McLuhan, 'The medium is the message' (Postman 1992). The influence of 'techno-values' is especially evident where computer technology has been applied using a 'product approach', that is, where the technology itself rather than its impact on learners, is the focal point. Conversely, where the technology has been used to facilitate learning activities that solve a specific problem or meet a specific need - a 'process approach' - it has proven to be much more culturally neutral (Burge, Wilson and Mehler 1984). Some examples of the biases reflected in the culture of technology are the value placed on speed, autonomy and 'context-free' information (Bowers 1988, Postman 1992).

Issues of information control

The strong interrelationship between language and culture has been illustrated by Logan (1995) in his discussion of the five stages of human communication and how each development led to unexpected changes in society that in turn demanded altered educational methods. Ultimately, this transformation will lead to the end of specialisation (typified by logical, linear, phonetic language and thought) and an increase in multidisciplinary study (non-linear, web-like processing). One of the concepts that he and others (Burton 1992, Haywood 1995, Postman 1992) address is the blurring of the distinction between the value placed on knowledge and that placed on control of information.

There is some evidence that this blurring is indeed taking place. There has recently been an escalation in the debate between those who think of information as a cultural artefact and others who consider it to be a trade good. Increasingly, information is seen as an economic product - one that falls under the jurisdiction of international trade laws. The issue of control of information technologies, as in the two examples of Trans Border Data Flow and attempts to control electronic data transmission from the United States, has gained increasing urgency in countries that fear a cultural hegemony (Bowers 1988, Burton 1992).

Canadian control of content has been recognised as worthy of attention by the federal government, the broadcasting industry and by educators insofar as the Canadian content of textbooks is concerned. The scope of this attention is gradually being expanded to include electronic and computer technologies (Sirois and Forget 1995). Still, in the rush to gain access to the 'information highway', educators are among the primary advocates of the new technologies and their US biases. This is hardly surprising. Because there are so many similarities, apparent or real, many miss the more subtle elements embodied in Canada's radically different political and social culture (Coe 1988). Questions regarding the suitability of computer technology for teaching and learning have tended to focus on the influx of objectionable material via electronic media rather than its potential to undermine values and traditions (Sirois and Forget 1995).

Research and education issues

Communications technology was once important only to single mode distance education providers, but now traditional institutions are moving into a dual mode of providing both face-to-face and distance education. There is a growing emphasis on the 'global classroom' (Bradsher 1996). Learning institutions play a key role in the transformation to information society, and as educators we must be concerned about the extent to which technology may come to dominate learning rather than support it. Most of the current research into the impact of computer technologies has a technical rather than a cultural focus. These new technologies, however, should not be reduced to the status of a mere piece of equipment: they are complex packages bringing into play a host of social, cultural and economic factors. Hence, technology transfers form part of a specific process of cultural appropriation, which dictates whether they will be successful or not. (Jouet and Coudray 1990, 39).

It is essential that we shift our focus from the skills needed to operate the technologies to a more balanced position, where the need to develop the knowledge to become critical users plays a more important role. Users, whether teachers, learners or researchers, must have the ability to make informed choices about the computer technologies. While it is

[1] These are two of the dedicated, single mode, post-secondary distance education universities. Tele-Université is located in Quebec and Athabasca University in Alberta. The third is the Open Learning Institute in British Columbia.

not possible to predict the impact that these technologies will have on cultural integrity, we have an obligation to temper our enthusiasm until we have carefully considered all of the implications. While the examples provided here may be Canadian, these concerns are not exclusive to the Canadian environment (Sirois and Forget 1995). Rather, they reflect those of many countries, and cultures, that find themselves in dependent positions.

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The use of problem-based learning in the education of adults in part-time higher education

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Abstract

Statistics show a continuing demand by adults for part-time higher education, and in Building related subjects approximately 40% of adults in higher education are educated through a part-time route. An analysis of the success or otherwise of student centered approaches to learning in part-time education is considered important by the authors because

> part-time higher education has seldom received the attention paid to full-time provision, and it has never enjoyed the latter's level of resourcing. But it has been, and remains, of considerable value to those who have experienced it and who could not engage in full-time study. (Tight 1991, 21).

The authors have experienced difficulties in introducing problem-based learning into day release undergraduate education. In attempting to define where these problems lay, they realised that most research and practice in the area of problem-based learning was in full-time education. The authors attempt to redress this imbalance by focusing on the experiences of a course team for an undergraduate BSc (Hons) Surveying, a five-year day-release programme. The course team have attempted to facilitate the principles and practices of problem-based learning for the past four years and this paper concentrates on their experiences of the *process* of problem-based learning, and not the *practice* of surveying.

A questionnaire completed by the course team was analysed and this indicates that the team uses a variety of techniques for facilitating problem-based learning. When comparing the practices of the course team with established problem-based learning principles it is clear that what is occurring is a variation of problem-based learning. Could an effective approach to student centered learning therefore be formulated for the benefit of the part-time student?

Introduction

'I am clean forgotten, as a dead man out of mind'.[1] So may the part-time student justifiably claim when considering the plethora of educational research heaped upon full-time education.

Student profile

The department in which the authors work (construction and surveying) caters predominantly for students studying by day-release or other modes of partial attendance. Part-time study has been defined by Tight (1991, 2) as 'higher education undertaken by people who are unwilling or unable - for whatever reason or combination or reasons - to enrol as full-time students'.

The authors' experience suggests that this student profile identified by Tight is typical of their students, who are generally more mature with infinitely greater practical experience. They are often highly motivated with supportive and stable domestic environments which can benefit their studies. To the detriment of their studies, they often have demanding employers who perceive education as secondary when considering their employees' workload. Also they may have personal situations and difficulties that impact on their studies.

Between 1989 and 1993 Department for Education and Employment statistics (1995) show that in full-time building-related higher education, student numbers have risen from 21,382 to 32,414. In that same period, student numbers for part-time courses have remained steady at around 25,000. Part-time students in this field between the years 1989 and 1993 have therefore made up between 44% and 54% of the total undergraduate population in the UK.

The nature and relevance of problem-based learning

One area of learning that appears on the surface to be particularly relevant to part-time study in building-related subjects is that of problem-based learning. Building is a dynamic environment that continually revolves around problem-solving situations, these problems tending to be 'wicked', defined by Green and Simister (1996) as unbounded and indeterminate. Work takes place in teams, another common problem-based learning approach. Professionals in building have to be flexible and adaptable to changing circumstances. It therefore seems logical that this inherent ability is utilised in part-time student education. The aim of a programme of study should therefore

> ... stimulate an inquiring, analytical and creative approach, encouraging independent judgment and critical self-awareness. (Gibbs 1992)

Entwistle (1983) suggests that student-centered approaches are more relevant to part-time and mature students due to their greater 'heterogeneity, experience and responsibility'. The authors feel that the skills of part-time students, because of their practical experience, are more closely allied to practical

[1] Psalms 31:12, Book of Common Prayer.

problem solving and therefore effective learning, compared to full-time students. It is the notion that students are used to solving 'messy, indeterminate problems' (Schon 1987) as part of their everyday working lives. The criticisms of predominantly lecture-based courses in higher education for the professions, according to Boud and Feletti (15), are

> lack of attention to issues such as the relevance of subjects, for placing little emphasis on encouraging teamwork, for poor attempts at developing skills of enquiry in students, and for inadequate portrayal of the context of major issues and problems. (1991)

The authors' experience would concur with this, hence their keenness to see whether the practice of problem-based learning on the surveying course overcame these difficulties. Boud and Feletti further advocate that problem-based learning 'addresses these criticisms head-on and uses such deficiencies as the foundation of its approach'. Ryan (63) suggests that the challenge to us as educators is to

> bring out into the open their covert expectations of students, and to conduct their session in ways .... which are designed to actively assist students as they move from dependence to independence as learners. (1993)

Problem-based learning in surveying education

The course being studied as a vehicle for this research is a BSc (Hons) in surveying, which is a five year programme carried out between two institutions, Manchester College of Arts and Technology for the first two years, and the authors' own institution of University College Salford for the final three years. This research applies to the process of problem-based learning at both institutions.

The course is semesterised and modularised and a lecture programme underpins the student learning. The course document clearly identifies problem-based learning as the chosen mechanism for facilitating learning and assessment. A module tutor may choose to undertake non-assessed problem-based learning exercises but must facilitate a minimum number of assessed problem-based learning exercises.

This research therefore seeks to answer whether the implementation of problem-based learning has been successful within the surveying programme.

Methodology for the study

The BSc (Hons) in Surveying has been running successfully since 1992 with cohorts graduating in the last two years. The expertise built up by the course team over this period in dealing with problem-based learning issues was something the authors wished to take advantage of. In researching the potential research methodology approaches, the Delphi Method (Dalkey 1969), developed at the Rand Corporation's think tank, appeared to be the most appropriate method taking into account the fact that depth of feedback was considered important. The Delphi technique was originally used in forecasting, where expert opinion was sought from a number of sources and a series of stages used in order to gain consensus from the results received. More qualitatively the Delphi method has been used in order to clarify where fuzzy issues exist and uncertain parameters require definition.

The experiences and perceptions of the team were sought through the completion of a questionnaire. By this method the authors were able to establish whether problem-based learning was effective for the part-time student and by comparing approaches from the whole course team a best practice approach could be formulated.

This gathering of data via the questionnaire is seen by the authors as the first step in this process. Qualitative answers were sought in order to allow lecturers to analyse their experiences and for the issues to be recognised. The analysis from the questionnaires forms the basis of this paper. A subsequent follow up approach to the questionnaires will be formulated and this will form the basis of future research. The Delphi method allows for an unspecified number of follow-up procedures until an answer is arrived at, the problem is resolved or the logic clarified.

Analysis from the course team; defining problem-based learning

From a course team of 27 there were 20 replies. Cherrington and Van Ments (1994) identify the difficulties involved in attempting to define problem-based learning too closely. The analysis of the questionnaires supports this finding in that respondents saw problem-based learning as being based around student investigation. Some respondents clearly considered that the process being carried out was not true problem-based learning but a half way stance between traditional project work and problem-based learning.

The value of problem-based learning as a mechanism for covering part of the syllabus not formally taught was discussed by some respondents which ties in with the definition by Boud and Feletti (1991) in that problem-based learning should start with a problem and not with a presentation of the subject matter in the context of a lecture.

When asked to indicate whether problem-based learning was different to a lecture, all of the respondents confirmed that it was. This unanimity wavered when asked to say whether problem-based learning was different to a seminar or tutorial; 80%

gave an unqualified yes, 15% said no with 5% not clear. When asked if problem-based learning differed in terms of conventional assessment, 65% thought problem-based learning was different, 10% thought it was not, and 25% qualified their answers with comments that indicate that the type of problem-based learning they deliver is tending towards conventional assessment.

When asked whether problem-based learning on the surveying course is different to that in other disciplines most respondents indicated they were unaware of what these practices were. Those respondents that showed knowledge of other areas acknowledged that problem-based learning usually has more practical-based applications than they are delivering on the surveying course.

Analysis from the course team; format and process of problem-based learning

Ninety percent of respondents use problem-based learning as part of their assessment procedure while 75% use it for non-assessed exercises. Non-assessment exercises are seen as an introduction only to the subject area and to the style of problem-based learning sessions run by the lecturers.

When considering the introduction and direction given to students most respondents took a similar approach with an initial introduction followed by direction only when sought by groups or individuals. One respondent made a particular point that no direction to large groups was given and lecturer support was student driven. Student attendance at problem-based learning sessions varied widely; some sessions were even noted as compulsory. In the main, attendance was low, between 10% - 20% being typical. Concern by respondents of this was evident but suggestions for improvement were few. One respondent noted that continual assessment may well be an option to consider. Eighty five percent of respondents thought that integration between subjects was a good idea and the vast majority of problem-based learning tasks were tackled individually by students, rather than group work. Respondents were divided as to whether problem-based learning tasks took more or less time than conventional assessment, 45% thought it took more time, 40% less time and 15% thought the same time or were unclear.

It is clear that a variety of feedback methods are adopted. Some positive events were noted particularly when the class was able to witness the work of their peers, either as part of a presentation, as a critical appraisal in the design subjects or in the exchanging of individual work between group members. A number of respondents noted students' absence during feedback and there was a general feeling that feedback to students on an individual basis would be useful. One respondent noted the danger of revealing too much information about a marking scheme and warned of the potential hazard from changing a mark awarded after representation from students.

Analysis of the course team; benefits, problems and improvements

When commenting on the benefits of problem-based learning for students and staff there were very similar responses. The vast majority were clear that problem-based learning improved students' ability to research and gain knowledge and that by going through the process the knowledge would be more readily understood and retained. Benefits to staff were less obviously admitted to; however, there were a number of references to lecturers being kept up to date by the findings of the students and interestingly one respondent pointed out that problem-based learning actively encouraged discussion within a course team, rather than an isolated single subject approach.

Difficulties were recognised in a number of areas. The result of modules being delivered in semesters appears not to allow for sufficient application in some subjects. Students progressing through the course appear to encounter difficulties, particularly when they move between the two institutions. It is clear that some respondents believe that there must be traditional delivery of a subject prior to the setting of a problem-based learning exercise. Student attendance and their reluctance to seek guidance are the main concerns.

There are a large number of calls for a consistent approach across the course. This would have the added benefit of clarifying the meaning of problem-based learning, as it is clear that respondents hold different perceptions of the process. The utilisation of real industry problems and even integrating with other courses are suggested. A number of respondents felt that by changing the daily timetable, attendance could be improved. Interestingly one respondent with a sound knowledge of industry pointed out that the day-release student did not need to develop problem solving skills as, he believed, these were inherent in the student. The authors conclude that more time for these students should be devoted to improving their transferable skills.

Conclusion

Margetson (1994) argues that knowledge of problem-based learning is not widespread and by contrast, subject-based learning, with lectures as a prominent vehicle of learning, backed up by tutorials and so on, is far more familiar to people. Typically problem-based learning either accounts for whole modules or large elements of the curriculum, as in medical education, or educators use it as a vehicle for fieldwork or an end of course project block, as in engineering education. So on the surveying course,

despite good intentions in the writing of the course document, have we achieved problem-based learning? Can problem-based learning effectively be integrated with a lecture programme and with formal assessment? Is problem-based learning an effective method for facilitating the learning of a part-time student?

One way to answer these questions would be to conclude by seeing whether our research and analysis addresses the four crucial conditions required for a deep approach (rather than surface approach) to learning identified by Biggs and referred to in Gibbs as essential elements of problem-based learning, namely

> an increased quality of learning could be expected because of the combination of four elements entailed by problem-based learning; motivational context, learner activity, interaction with others and well-structured knowledge base. (1992)

Motivational context

Students do not set the questions for themselves, they are preset. Yet they are encouraged to find their own way of approaching and answering the question. Where possible the problem is set within the context of typical problems within the industry, so that students can see the relevance but this is not possible in all subject areas and not all staff are willing.

Learner activity and interaction with others

Students have the opportunity to participate in discussion groups but are reluctant to take this up and attendance is low. Interaction with others occurs when the assessment is based on group work, but this only forms a small element, contrary to Barrows (1986) who advocates group work as essential. Self-directed study on an individual basis outside the institution is the more common occurrence.

Knowledge base

Students should begin with the problem, but typically they start with the lecture programme, because sometimes as staff we tune into the fact that we have to cover all the syllabus, so the process of student-centered learning is sacrificed for content via lecture- centered learning - what is referred to in medical education as 'coverititis syndrome' (Des Marchais and Dumais 1990).

The question of whether we have achieved problem-based learning on the surveying course is difficult to answer. We need to continue working with module tutors via the Delphi technique to refine a common approach to the course. We need to look at our differences in opinion of the nature of problem-based learning compared to the experts. The answer to the question is that the analysis with tutors shows that we are achieving a degree of problem-based learning, but that there are significant difficulties in using it as the model for part-time education.

Further research

This would take on board the comments already made in the conclusion, but would seek to expand our knowledge, interpretation and practice of problem-based learning on the course. Further research would focus on the student perspective, which has been considered important by other researchers in building-related subjects (Kajewski 1996, Kenley 1995).

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"Oh look! Is that 'reflective practice'? Perhaps" - The disintegration and integration of 'reflective practice'

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> So quick bright things come to confusion.
> (W Shakespeare, A Midsummer Night's Dream, I,i,149)

Introduction

The concept and practice of 'reflective practice' appears to be undergoing a process of fake fraternisation by both government and professional educators as a post-modernist foil to modernist centralist national educational policy (Hartley 1995). Both government and professional educators appear to have developed a neurotic and destructively dependent relationship with 'reflective practice', the former in order to 'soften up' the impact of rationalist, technicist policies on professional groups, and the latter in order to preserve the notions of local control, professional discretion and the remnants of 'theoretical' content. In this process 'reflective practice', like the universe, appears to be expanding infinitely and in all directions in terms of the bewildering and meaningless number and types of practices which fall within its newly acquired mantle (Ecclestone 1996; Morrison 1995; Calderhead 1989). Such is the state of entropy that surrounds 'reflective practice' that as a distinctive and integrated concept and practice it has been marginalised at the price of popularisation, and in this process, been rendered meaningless, specious and instrumental. It has become a mantra and a slogan which legitimises rather than questions existing practice; an instrument of political and professional convenience and conformity rather than a process of critical inquiry.

Technical	*Hermeneutic*	*Critical*
Objective	Subjective	Both
Impersonal	Personal	Social
Scientific	Psychological	Sociological
Formal Knowledge	Informal Knowledge	Both
Rational	Intuitive	Rational
Dialogue	Monologue	Dialogue
Non-Political	Non-Political	Political
Existing Practice	Improve Existing Practice	Change Existing Practice
Formal	Informal	Formal
Amoral	Moral	Moral
Popular	Popular	Marginalised

Table 1: 'Paradigms' of reflective practice

The typical response to this state of affairs has been to emphasise 'reflective practice' as a distinctive and integrated concept in the form of three 'paradigms': **technical rationality**, **hermeneutic** and **critical**, each defining different values, methods, types of knowledge and practice domains (Ecclestone 1996) (see Table 1). As an attempt to re-establish 'reflective practice' as an integrated concept, this is hardly convincing, and may itself be seen as part of the disintegrative, entropic fracturing process it seeks to ameliorate and clarify. This paper seeks to offer a more fundamental approach and response to this situation and one which will suggest that 'reflective practice' must be based on a realistic and integrated concept of practice itself; a core objective and process which is common to all three current 'paradigms' of 'reflective practice'; incorporation of an approach which has been ignored and which offers a framework for understanding the current politicisation of 'reflective practice'.

Realistic 'practice' as a basis of 'reflective practice'

It seems that conceptions of 'reflective practice' have ignored what may be regarded as a more realistic concept of practice, and one which integrates actual practice rather than fractures it. The 'rush' to invent examples of reflective practice as legitimation has, paradoxically, meant that real practice has been ignored. Superficiality in reflective practice has inevitably lead to an equally superficial approach to practice itself, a tendency which has been exacerbated by the wholesale importation of the Schönian hermeneutic version of reflective practice and its marrying with technical rationality. Ecclestone (1996) points to the deeper and more worrying tendency of hermeneutic reflective practice

being imported within technical rationality i.e. the technicist use of Schönian artistry and informal 'theory'. The critical (political) version of reflective practice (Van Manen 1995) has been marginalised (Ecclestone 1996), which itself suggests that Schönian hermeneutic reflective practice has been politicised and that it was vulnerable to such a process. This is consistent with the hermeneutic emphasis upon improving current practice within the context of existing political values and assumptions, whatever they may be. This vulnerability has, it seems, been extensively exploited by both government and professional educators.

Rather than 'reflective practice' being based on a realistic understanding of practice, it seems that the reverse has happened; that is, practice is understood only in terms of the domains and types of reflective practice currently articulated. This seems peculiarly perverse given that 'reflective practice' must be distinguished from existing practice in order to identify what reflective practice means, but is entirely consistent with the convenient and instrumental use of reflective practice as a means of legitimising existing practice rather than critically investigating it. Notions of 'reflective practice' narrow and define how we think of practice, rather than the other way around.

The best and most obvious illustration of this is the vertical segregation of the domains of practice imposed by the three 'paradigms' of 'reflective practice', yet in real practice, all three domains co-exist, inter-connect and interact simultaneously and dynamically. The technical, hermeneutic and political domains of 'reflective practice' co-exist in practice, and represent an integrated wholistic entity. All professional educators use technical-rational knowledge, possess and use informal, subjective 'theories' and interpretations of and within client situations and professional decision-making, and relate these to a political dimension. Such professionals may not be achieving 'reflective practice' in any of these areas, but they are simultaneously functioning within all three epistemologically and practically. Although such functioning may be deemed to be 'integrated', this does not exclude the possibility that the price paid for this adaptive integration may involve less than optimum levels of competence which 'reflective practice' may identify and ameliorate. The current 'paradigms' of reflective practice do not allow for simultaneous interrogation of existing practice at all three levels. The co-existence of the technical-rational and hermeneutic forms is available; however, this 'integration' appears to be defined only in terms of a 'technicist' version of hermeneutic reflective practice, that is, towards a technical-rational definition of reflective practice. Additionally, and given Schön's railings against technical rationality (Schön 1983, 1987), it is surprising that technical rationality is now considered a domain of 'reflective practice' whereas previously it was not so considered. It may be suggested that these 'paradigms' as a framework reflect the primacy of a technical-rationalist orientation typical of an 'academic' theoretical agenda, and indicates that the theory-practice divide is wider than ever. If so, this may in turn suggest that academe's collaboration with the political fraternisation of 'reflective practice' may denote deeply intrinsic epistemological beliefs and values concerning formal 'objective' theoretical/technical knowledge versus subjective, experiential, informal knowledge, rather than a purely extrinsic, convenient and defensive conformity.

'Reflective practice' seems to be conceptualised as an 'add-on' element to practice, like a roof rack on a car, rather than something which is integral, essential and central to the design and implementation of practice. Within this 'add-on' approach, there seems to be an assumption that practice is well understood and that reflection and its processes can be simply attached to this understanding. Yet, to make things more complex, this 'add-on' philosophy is also reversed such that practice is 'added-on' to our understanding of 'reflective practice'. It may be suggested that, in order to take reflective practice seriously, practice itself needs to be taken seriously rather than, as currently, neither reflective practice nor practice are taken seriously.

Reflective practice as error detection

On the basis of better understanding may lead to correct implementation, I have attempted to identify and differentiate central themes and skills within 'reflective practice' in order to facilitate teachers' and adult educators' understanding of the concept (Bright 1995, 1996). Synthesising further in the present context, it may be suggested that all 'reflective practice' essentially boils down to a single objective although this may involve many discrete processes. The essential critical objective is the detection of error in the information professionals use in decision-making and the formulation and implementation of action. The basic idea behind this view is that all professional decision-making and action is based on information concerning all aspects of that decision and action relating to it including information on the effectiveness of that action. If the quality of that information is inferior or reduced in some way (for example, inaccurate, invalid, unreliable, untested, assumed inference or

proposition) the quality of the decision and action stemming from it will be reduced in effectiveness and its ability to produce desired outcomes in client contexts. An eclectic view of 'information' is taken and this can include formal academic 'theory', technical knowledge, informal, subjective, experiential 'theories', 'gut' reactions and intuition. Perfect knowledge is not being assumed within this view. In fact, there may be a tendency for practitioners to assume an over-reliance on either technical knowledge or experientially based hermeneutic knowledge and the 'off-the shelf' types of solutions they both imply together with an epistemological assumption of infallibility. It is precisely because knowledge is not perfect that 'reflective practice' seeks to question the possibly erroneous status and use of knowledge and information in the design and implementation of professional action. Some types of knowledge and information may be testable intellectually and cognitively, though this itself may be very difficult and involves extensive reflective and reflexive processes, but a further stage of testing for error involves monitoring and reflecting upon the effect of action. This refers to Kolb's (1984) active experimentation-concrete experience quadrant of the learning cycle and has been referred to by other writers (such as Schön 1983, 1987; Argyris and Schön 1974; Boreham 1988; Piaget 1952). From this perspective, 'reflective practice' involves a transactional and dynamically interactive orientation of the practitioner's practice in the contexts it addresses (Bright 1995, 1996), a true integration of reflection and practice, and one which stresses the need to identify and correct possible errors in the formulation and implementation of plans for action: an integration of internal processes (divergent and assimilative reflective observation and abstract conceptualisation) and external processes (convergent and accommodative active experimentation and concrete experience).

The relative and paradoxical strengths and weaknesses of refined, formal academic knowledge and informal, experiential common-sense have been discussed elsewhere (Pepper 1942; Argyris *et al* 1985). The central feature of academic, discipline based knowledge and what gives it its reliability and precision, is its exposure to extensive public error detection processes. Argyris' *Action Science* concept (Argyris *et al* 1985) explicitly, and Schön's work (Schön 1983, 1987) implicitly, extends this error detection feature to hermeneutic and technical knowledge and understanding. In this sense, 'reflective practice' and its error-detection objective and processes represent the constructive accumulation and use of public and private criticism in the area of professional practice. From what was said earlier, it seems that the motivation for the current popular fake fraternisation with 'reflective practice' stems more from a need to avoid rather than embrace and entertain criticism and its consequences. This may be especially the case with professional groups who are deemed to possess specialist expert knowledge (usually defined academically and technically) and professional 'expertise' which it is in their interests to protect and defend. Given the extensive evidence that human beings are inordinately prone to self-fulfilling prophesies, the pervasive use of untested attributions, avoid disconfirming evidence, and to rationalising rather than being rational, (Argyris and Schön 1974; Argyris *et al* 1985; Boreham 1988) there is no evidence to suggest that professional educators are any different. Human beings also appear to be extremely defensive and psychologically 'brittle' about criticism and negative 'feedback' even when it is constructive. What seems to be needed is a culture of criticism which facilitates the detection of error: a predisposition, willingness and commitment to the exploration and investigation of the epistemological bases of professional action and practice. It is suggested that this is precisely what a congruent and integrated 'reflective practice' represents and that this may be one reason why it is systematically avoided.

The re-integration of Argyris and Schön (1974)

There is a persistent and worrying anomaly in the literature on 'reflective practice' which maintains and reinforces the current lack of integration within the concept. The anomaly concerns the theoretical relationship between Argyris and Schön's jointly authored book (Argyris and Schön 1974) and Schön's subsequent single authored books (Schön 1983, 1987) from which most of the initial interest and understanding of 'reflective practice' (at least in its hermeneutic form) stems. Very little explicit citation of their joint book in 1974 and its seminal ideas is found in Schön's subsequent publications. Similarly, other writers seem to cite much of Schön's single authored post-1974 work but almost totally ignore Argyris and Schön's 1974 book and Argyris' single and jointly authored post-1974 books (for example Eraut 1985, 1994; Boreham 1988; Furlong and Maynard 1995; Pollard and Tan 1994; Calderhead1989; Ecclestone 1996; Johnstone 1995). Conversely, Argyris, although recognising Schön's later books, does not appear to base or relate much of his theoretical ideas on or to them. So, Argyris and Schön's 1974 book and Argyris' later books are excluded from the literature on 'reflective practice'; neither author appears to cite each other's post 1974

work, and Schön's seminal post-1974 'reflective practice' books and publications in the field generally, make little reference to the ideas in the Argyris and Schön (1974) book. In essence the problem may be summarised as what is the conceptual relationship between Argyris and Schön (1974) and the remainder of the literature on 'reflective practice'? It is suggested that there are three seminal ideas in Argyris and Schön's book, all of which relate to 'reflective practice'.

Firstly, the notion of incongruence between 'espoused' theories of action (personally and socially acceptable, conscious and explicit reasons underlying action - why we think we did what we did) and actual theories of action (reasons which may be implicit, hidden and which may not be socially or personally acceptable - the real reasons why we did what we did). This aspect of Argyris and Schön's work, stressing implicit, informal 'theories', appears in some versions of hermeneutic 'reflective practice'; however, Argyris and Schön (1974) are invariably not cited and their methodology for discovering, and the deeper implications of, these 'theories'-in-use are totally absent. Secondly, Argyris and Schön (1974), based on extensive empirical evidence, suggested that despite the infinite variety theoretically possible in the content of informal 'theories', virtually all professionals have only one actual theory-in-use (see Table 2). This actual theory-in-use (Model I) forms the basis of their design of interactions with clients and colleagues to bring about professional outcomes and values which are contrary to their 'espoused' values and outcomes (Model II) . Most professionals are not aware of their use of Model I, and its contradiction of the 'espoused' Model II, although they can identify Model I and Model II and their contradiction in other professionals' interactions. Thirdly, Argyris and Schön identified learning as the key professional skill in developing competence and differentiated between Single Loop Learning (learning of means to achieve given ends) and Double Loop Learning (learning about the ends which means exist to achieve). Model I is characterised by Single Loop Learning and Model II by Double Loop Learning. In Argyris and Schön's typology, Model II and Double Loop Learning are axiomatically equated with continuing professional development, higher levels of professional competence and the achievement of desired and ethical professional client outcomes and values. Yet, most of the information used in the design of professional action and its outcomes are based on Model I processes and values, not those of Model II.

	Model I	*Model II*
Process Variables	Define goals and try to achieve them Maximise winning and minimise losing Minimise generating or expressing negative feelings Be rational	Maximise valid and accurate information Maximise free and informed choice Maximise internal commitment to the decision made
Behavioural Strategies	Unilaterally design and manage the environment Own and control the task Unilaterally protect yourself Unilaterally protect others	Bilaterally design and manage the environment Bilateral protection of self and others Use directly observable categories
Outcomes	Professional seen as defensive, inconsistent, incongruent, competitive, controlling, fearful of being vulnerable, manipulative, withholding feelings, overly/under concerned about others. Defensive norms, mistrust, lack of risk taking, extrinsic commitment, emphasis on diplomacy, power centred, competition, rivalry Low freedom of choice, low internal commitment. Self-sealing. Single-loop learning. Little public testing of theories. Much private testing of theories	Professional perceived as minimally defensive, facilitator, collaborator, choice creator Minimally defensive inter-personal relations and group dynamics Learning oriented norms - trust, individuality, open confrontation. High risk-taking Public testing of theories. Authenticity Autonomy. Freedom of choice. Double-loop learning. Reciprocity. Internal commitment Power sharing. Help others

Table 2: Model I and Model II Theories-In-Use (Argyris and Schön, 1974)

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Argyris and Schön's emphasis on learning, the distortion of information and its consequent error production in Model I, and the need to inquire into deeper, implicit motives and values in the design of professional action, appear to be clearly relevant to understanding existing professional practice and 'reflective practice'; yet this body of literature would not appear to have even been discussed in the literature let alone 'integrated' within 'reflective practice'.

Although Argyris and Schön introduce the concept of Double Loop Learning, which by its very definition can include all levels of critical reflection and learning including the political, they limit its use to professional, technical values rather than political values. Schön also does this in his two books (1983, 1987). Both Argyris and Schön (1974) and Schön (1983, 1987) effectively de-politicise 'reflective practice' which may be one reason why it is vulnerable to political absorption within a technical-rationalist ideology (Hartley 1995). This view would also suggest that centralist moves to technicist, modernist versions of 'reflective practice' (for example NVQs) themselves are a product of and produce Single Loop Learning and indicate national government as possessing Model I values and theories-in-use.

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Open and flexible provision - should it be seen as a solution or as a problem for learners?[1]

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This paper draws on the findings from a national study undertaken for the Department of Employment in 1994. The study was concerned with open and flexible learning in vocational education, and in particular, its learning effectiveness.

What do we mean by open and flexible learning?

Open, distance and flexible learning are terms which are used to define an increasingly diverse variety of learning delivery systems. In our study these included varying combinations of elements such as fixed or flexibly paced study/training, group work, individual work, workplace-based, tutor-supported, mentor supported, text and video/ computer-supported teaching and learning activities, some of which included assessment and some of which did not.

There is no agreed or comprehensive definition of open learning; rather it has been described as a relative concept (Scriven 1991) and an umbrella term which refers to a wide and diverse range of initiatives. (Thorpe and Grugeon 1987). An outline of some of the key characteristics of open and flexible learning was offered by the Employment Department in the tender document for this project:

> The term 'Open and Flexible Learning' is intended to comprise any form of learning which includes elements of flexibility which make it more accessible to learners than courses traditionally provided in centres of education and training. This flexibility arises variously from the content of the course and the way in which it is structured, the place of provision, the mode, the medium or timing of its delivery, the pace at which the learner proceeds, the forms of special support available, and the types of assessment offered. (Employment Department, 1993)

The main feature emphasised here is the accessibility of open learning, and the main ways in which barriers to learning may be removed. This very loose definition of open learning will obviously embrace multiple forms of learning provision, different facets of flexibility and different degrees of accessibility. Furthermore there is a central tension underlying the catch all term, as Robinson argues:

> The growth of open learning in the context of vocational education has highlighted the tension between open access and open pedagogy ... The aims of the (Open Tech) Programme were explicitly concerned with providing the workforce with industrially useful competence rather then competencies related to life in more general terms ... Access was a central issue because it was acknowledged that the workforce needed to be trained as it worked and so the open access aspects were seized as an essential part of the process ... (1989, 33)

The terms open and flexible learning are used increasingly in the training world in a variety of ways; course participants themselves appear to have various opinions about the meaning of these terms.

What students and trainees said the terms meant

A traditional course is...

'learning in a classroom 5 days a week like at school' (FE student)

'full-time (FE student)

'Set amount of work to get through' (In-Company trainee)

'One where the tutor teaches, pupils copy, exams based on a classroom situation (FE student)

An open learning course is...

'Open to anyone who wished to do the course without prerequisites' (FE student)

'One which allows work-based or home-based studying' (FE student)

'Self-paced, self study, set times' (In-Co trainee)

'Given a chair and VDU and told to 'work through the book'' (In-Company trainee)

'Correspondence' (FE student)

'Course provides the 'bones'. Up to student to put on the flesh by means of tutorials, workbooks guidance etc.' (In-Company trainee)

A flexible course is...

'Once per week' (FE)

'Self-paced, self-study, no time limits' (In-Company trainee)

[1] The research on which this paper is based was commissioned by the Department of Employment, now part of the DfEE. The views expressed in the paper are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department.

'Course can be constantly changed or is able to suit individual needs' (In-Company trainee)

'A course which can be done at a leisurely pace with no fixed time limits for end exams' (FE)

'Fits in with your lifestyle' (In-Company trainee)

As the examples above reveal, there are both interesting sets of agreements as well as diversities of opinion held among students and trainees as to what is meant by these terms. For example, it is quite clear that there is a relative consensus that traditional courses are time bound, location bound, tutor led and syllabus bound.

In contrast there is a relative diversity of opinion about what an open learning course is. There are those who see it very much as independent learning while others see it as student controlled, with tutors as a resource which can be accessed when needed. There are clearly mixed views as to whether it is location bound and whose time the studying is done in.

Finally, the flexible courses appear to be seen as very student centred. The general emphasis is on the pace and overall duration of the course rather than on the location of study. The control of the course by the student rather than by the tutor is more implicit in these responses.

Views on benefits and drawbacks of different modes of learning

Participants were asked what they saw as the main benefits and drawbacks of the two modes of study. These questions were completely open, so the answers participants gave were based very much on their own experience and knowledge. The most commonly mentioned benefits were group learning and the opportunity for interaction with other course participants. Other benefits such as the provision of a clear structure and early feedback were identified as benefits by a much smaller proportion of participants.

The drawbacks reflected the downside of the points raised under benefits to quite an extent. For instance the downside of the uniform training is the inflexibility that tends to come with it. In fact the perception of the inability of this mode of provision to meet the needs of individuals arises in several different ways in the answers to this question; the lack of personal tuition, the perceived inability for the pace of the course to be varied to meet individuals' needs are all identified. Some of the perceived drawbacks relate to the quality of what is provided rather than any intrinsic feature of that mode. So for example, the concerns about the effect of having a poor tutor or of the overcrowding which can occur with larger groups are not necessarily always features of traditional courses.

Two clear aspects emerged very strongly in relation to the benefits which it was felt that open and flexible learning provision can offer. First, there was a clear consensus between participants on both existing open and flexible learning and traditional courses that open and flexible learning courses were convenient for the learner. Secondly, it was agreed that they suited the learning needs of the individual and were more adaptable in terms of catering for people's different abilities.

One clear concern emerged in terms of perceived drawbacks, namely the need for self discipline and self-motivation by those undertaking this form of study or training. Two less widely held but possibly linked views on other drawbacks were concerns about the limited tutor contact and the lack of immediate feedback on progress.

Clearly the weight accorded these views does depend on the particular model of open and flexible learning actually being operated, but many participants currently involved in open and flexible learning do see these as problematic issues.

Learning effectiveness

In this section, we examine the findings from the study in relation to the learning effectiveness issues raised in the specification.

Different learning and cognitive styles

The courses selected for study covered a range of different types of learning skills taught through open and flexible learning. These included GCSE maths, chemical process operations engineering, management and supervisory skills, and health and social care. On the whole, the evidence for the effectiveness of open and flexible learning in teaching these sometimes very different skills was positive. There were three areas in particular however where some concerns were expressed by the tutors involved. These were maths, machine skills and person skills.

Maths: A key concern was whether linear subjects such as maths could be taught on a flexible basis when a core concept might be missed. Responses to this problem included the repetition of certain key modules for those who joined the course at different times of the year, access to tutorial help as and when students needed it, and regular feedback and assessment of progress with such a subject.

Machine skills: The concern here was that the video in use did not appear to give the students a sufficiently accurate 'feel' of the machine they were going to handle subsequently. However it was also recognised that the problem might be one of quality and appropriateness of media. Certainly the intention with this particular problem was to try to move on to

multimedia applications in the expectation that this would better meet the particular teaching needs of the tutors.

Person skills: These refer to interpersonal skills required for group work, interviewing, management tasks and so on. Concern here was expressed in relation to a certain type of open and flexible learning course, namely those which were complete learning packages undertaken in a self-study setting with no tutorial or group support.

Retention of knowledge and skills

We found evidence of two contrasting usages of open and flexible learning in relation to this issue. In one example the open and flexible learning materials were used both for initial training and as a back-up for 'refresher' training on those work problems which were relatively infrequent. The view was that while those aspects of the work which staff had to deal with on a daily basis could be relatively easily learned and reinforced through constant practice, there were other problems which only arose infrequently which staff were unlikely to remember accurately how to handle. In such situations, the appropriate open and flexible learning materials could be made available for them in order to ensure that correct procedures were followed. The other example came from the use of open and flexible learning materials for preparatory work prior to a tutor-led session, but this was generally seen as a less than satisfactory approach, in part, because the material was often 'information heavy' and in part because the necessary time for study during working hours was frequently difficult to find.

A key advantage on the flexible courses was the students' ability to reflect on their learning in relation to their own work practice while they were actually at work, rather than having to just remember the material through the traditionally taught block release course.

Understanding

The learners adopted a similar range of approaches to learning as those found hitherto in students in higher education. What was particularly noticeable was that the discriminating factor was not the mode of study they were following, but the sector in which the course was offered. For example there were significantly more students following FE sector courses who were adopting a surface approach to their learning and there was a significantly higher proportion of learners on in-company training courses scoring highly on the self-confidence factor.[1] The reason for the difference between the different sectors is unknown but could be the result of differences in the socio-economic profile of the students studying in the two sectors. Further analyses are needed here.

Ownership

How far does open and flexible learning encourage individuals to be independent and lifelong learners? There are several dimensions to this question. First is the issue of whether this objective is one held by the course or the programme. In practice, it was usually a part of the FE college aims, and was frequently mentioned by tutors from this sector. It was also mentioned by two of the in-company training organisations included in the study. There does appear to be the dual concern within some in-company training both to train the individual to achieve the course objectives, and also to set this training in the context of their personal development.

The other dimension is the implicit assumptions made about the existing level of learners' competence in independent learning in the design of the open and flexible learning courses. While some courses and programmes started with the assumption that the learner would need plenty of support, and then gradually attenuated that support, others, in particular the ones which used unsupported open and flexible learning for preparatory work, did not appear to have given consideration to the need to build up learners' independent learning skills.

Who can take advantage of open and flexible learning?

The general question then arises as to whether there are some people who are better able to take advantage of open and flexible learning provision than others. The answer to this is that there appears to be nothing inherent in open and flexible learning which renders it unsuitable for any particular group of learners, although it does very much depend upon the model used. Certainly the perception among some staff in the FE sector courses was that open and flexible learning presented the younger more immature learners with considerable difficulties, particularly in respect of self motivation. Intriguingly the students themselves were also strongly aware of this same problem. However there were different responses to it. The one was to see the opportunity to use open and flexible learning as an opportunity to learn to take responsibility for their own learning. Certainly there were students who appreciated the fact that they had acquired learning skills as well as mathematical skills through using the maths GCSE workshop. The other response typified the 'passive' learner who felt that the traditional method was still necessary at their age to stop them cheating by skipping those sections of the workbooks which they found difficult!

For many students however there is no choice. The City and Guilds course in process plant operations

[1] For a discussion of learning approaches such as the surface approach and the deep approach, see Entwistle and Tait and Calder and McCollum)

provided for BP employees was a good if rare example of a course which was deliberately run in parallel to a day release course. The staff taking the open and flexible learning course would not have been able to take the day release course, and the shift work nature of their jobs meant the open and flexible learning was the only option for getting essential technical qualifications open to them.

Final comment

The pace of the change taking place within vocational training must be recognised as a key feature when considering the context for this study. Within the FE sector changes in the funding basis, in types of qualifications offered and in assessment are all fuelling rapid and large shifts in the nature and type of provision. Unfortunately there is some evidence that this has had some negative effects insofar as tutor attitudes to open and flexible learning provision are concerned in that colleges are seen to be 'doing the right thing for the wrong reason', squeezing staff numbers to cut down costs, not providing sufficient support to open and flexible learning students, and not providing additional administrative support to staff to cope with the necessarily increased administrative duties brought about by the changes. Similarly in the in-company training field, cutbacks in training budgets and the increased use of the 'market' led approach to training are also making considerable demands on staff. It is clear that there are major shifts taking place within the vocational training field, and it is also clear that open and flexible learning will be playing an increasingly important role in the provision which emerges.

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Open learning workshops: the way forward

Margaret Cashin

> Open learning has been defined 'as a process which focuses on access to educational opportunities and a philosophy which makes learning more client and student centred. It is learning which allows the learner to choose how to learn, when to learn, where to learn and what to learn as far as possible within the resource constraints of any education and training provision. (Paine 1988)

Introduction

Statistics produced by the Government, CBI and local chambers of commerce indicate that companies will be turning away from 16-18 year-olds and will be looking to adult returners as prospective employees. Therefore, there needs to be some provision within the education system to provide for the adult returners. In 1991 the Government launched the Flexible Learning Framework, published by the Department of Employment, to provide for a flexible workforce for the future. It maintained that there is no longer a situation where one can assume that one can enter a job and stay there for the rest of one's working life but, rather, working life is 'characterised by rapid and escalating change, international competition, and a constant need to update skills and knowledge' and one can expect to have several career changes. The only way to achieve this is by adopting a flexible approach to education and training. In 1995 the consultation document on 'Lifetime Learning' was published which was to bring to the fore the importance of lifelong learning/adult learning to the economic prosperity, social cohesion and personal development of people (both employed and unemployed) and open up the debate on how this was going to be achieved.

The basis of traditional education systems in Britain is one which is designed for the initial education and training of young people and children. The public provision for the education and training of adults has previously been external to the system designed for children. Adults who have had experiences during their school years are unlikely to be attracted to the conventional mode of adult education offered and open learning/open learning workshops can be a way to attract adults back into learning.

What are open learning workshops?

The whole area of defining 'open Learning' is highly problematic. It is problematic as to whether a whole activity is open learning or whether open learning can be an element within either some form of traditional learning or an activity with an individual outside the realms of any institutionalised learning. Many terms such as distance learning, flexible learning, independent learning, correspondence learning, Open University, flexistudy, discovery learning, programmed learning and so on have been used and the distinction between them has been very blurred. Open learning workshops can be anything from workshops where students can go to conduct research either with or without computer facilities/resources, with or without tutor support and open for limited periods of time to workshops which are fully tutor supported and open for long periods of time. For the purposes of this paper the open learning workshop is a workshop specifically designed for learners who can enrol at any time, attend when they like, for as long as they like and study what they want. It will always be tutor supported.

In this situation teachers are no longer sole purveyors of information. They are facilitators helping students to plan, manage and appraise their own learning. The teacher helps students to negotiate learning targets and works out the best way to achieve these. This is a totally different role for the teacher and there is frequently resistance to change as teachers do not want to lose the control they have had. It is also believed that institutions could be unscrupulous and use open learning for economic rather than educational reasons. This is particularly so at a time when institutions are competing on equal terms for students and ultimately for finances. When cutting down on costs, open learning is seen as a way of reducing course contact time, staff hours and increasing student numbers. Thus there is a threat to jobs, status and security.

Barriers to learning

For all adults there are potential barriers to learning. They can and do prevent potential learners from undertaking a programme of study.

One of the main functions of open learning is to attempt to remove the barriers that prevent attendance on traditionally run courses while at the same time suggesting a learner-centred philosophy. Some of these barriers have been previously identified by Cross (1978), ACACE (1982), Bailey (1987), Woodley (1987), Hampshire Open Learning Unit (1989), Rogers (1989), and McGivney (1990).

There are barriers both external and internal to the learner. Those which are external include those which can be divided into geographical such as courses in inaccessible centres to students; transport not available or very expensive; lack of guidance from providers; lack of child care provision; high cost of course; high cost of equipment and books; stereotyping by age, race, class, gender, health,

physical disabilities; those which can be divided into barriers created by traditional provision - fixed-time tables and term times; pre-requirements on entry; inappropriate curriculum; inappropriate course materials; inappropriate methods - that is, suitable for school leavers; lack of bridging courses; inappropriate provision for progression; study associated with written work, tests, marks and examinations; potential failure; poor liaison with employers and clients; lack of information and guidance; environment not conducive to learning; limitation of experience-based accreditation; insufficient market research to determine the needs of employers and learners, skills' shortages In the workplace barriers also exist: employers not convinced of the value of training; tendency for the short-term approach to education and training-based on immediate needs; inappropriate training practices and styles - not student centred; time constraints with work; restraints caused by cost of providing training; lack of training needs analysis; lack of or poor communication within an organisation; lack of contact with training providers; poor opinion of training providers; inequality of opportunity.

Barriers which are internal to the learner have been identified as personal such as: specific work experience/training is needed; lack of information on training; isolation; lack of support from family or friends; conflict of roles; constraints of time; family pressures; lack of motivation ie uncertainty as to the type of course to follow; low self esteem/confidence, stress, worry, anxiety over returning to study; fear of assessment; fear of failure; fear of losing face; inability to see value of a course of study due to restraints of the labour market; low self image. Others result from poor learning legacies: students not having the appropriate background knowledge; previous programmes at the wrong level; bad experiences in school; students not having the necessary skills; programmes of learning not relevant to the needs of the student; demotivation by poor marks on previous programmes; conflict with tutor;. There can also be the influence of the 'significant other adults' which result in: indifference to the learner; dismissing previous achievement; ridiculing achievement; antagonism to learning achievement (Hampshire Open Learning Unit, 1989). All these help create a poor self image which leads to problems for the learner wishing to follow a learning programme. To admit that there is something new to learn is to admit that there is something wrong with the present and this poses a challenge to previous beliefs (Rogers, 1989).

Kent TEC commissioned IFF Research Ltd to carry out a major study of the learning experiences and attitudes of the people in Kent towards learning in order to provide information which would help them formulate a strategy to address the different target groups identified and increase their participation in learning. The study involved 1,000 face to face interviews with people from all over Kent between the ages of 15 and 55.

The barriers they identified were (for women): having to look after children; family commitment; learning being too expensive; wanting to relax after finishing work; being too busy to think about learning; being nervous; not having the necessary qualifications or too old to learn; (for men): just wanting to relax after finishing work; being too busy with work to start learning; unable to get time off work; learning too expensive; not having enjoyed learning when younger. Classroom teaching appeared to be the preferred learning method by the majority although just how accurate this is is questionable as it might not have been actual preference but rather what people know and are used to. There is always a problem when looking at research already carried out. Pre-determined lists have been used. Those being surveyed could also provide details of barriers or obstacles that are socially acceptable and not identify those they have actually experienced.

Cognitive styles and personality types

Several institutions in the US consider that only certain personality types are suited to open learning and before a student embarks on an open learning programme they have to undergo a personality test to see whether they have a cognitive style or personality type that is suitable to open learning. Certain cognitive styles or personality types are therefore unable to avail themselves of open learning programmes which places considerable emphasis on the individual as the focus of the learning process.

In the 1950s Guildford differentiated between two different types of cognitive style: convergent and divergent thinking. Convergent thinkers were characterised by their ability to deal with problems requiring one correct answer. They are favoured by objective intelligence tests which have only one right answer which could be found from information given. Divergent thinkers are best dealing with problems which could have several equally acceptable answers. Guildford's categories represent two very different styles to problem solving. The convergent thinker is better suited to closed problems and the divergent thinker to an open approach. This has a correspondence with the work of Parlett (1969) and his 'syllabus bound' and 'syllabus free' learners. The personality traits of those who favoured courses which were syllabus bound and convergent thinker were the same and those who preferred courses which were syllabus free and the divergent thinker were the same. Syllabus bound learners liked structure and did not like

the freedom to organise their own study whereas the syllabus free learners enjoyed being in control of their own learning. This either/or approach can be open to criticism as the majority of students are not at one end of the continuum or the other, but rather somewhere in the middle.

Honey and Mumford (1988) identified individuals as being either 'activists', 'reflectors', 'theorists' or 'pragmatists'. They devised a learning style questionnaire and used this to discover preferred learning styles. Honey and Mumford's Learning Style Questionnaire was given to 200 open learning workshop students to complete to determine whether there was a dominance of a particular learning style in the open learning workshops. The results were analysed in the first place to see which category had the highest number of positive responses. The highest scores for each student indicated that 60 percent of students were reflectors. 30 percent were pragmatists but only 5 percent were activists and 5 percent were theorists. Activists and theorists were well under represented in the highest score achieved.

Activists learn best when there are new experiences, excitement and a frequent change of activity. They enjoy the here and now and adopt trial and error methods without thinking or reflecting on what they are doing as they are dominated by immediate experience. As a result they will not learn so well in situations where the role is 'passive' ie they have to listen, read and watch. Many open learning activities do involve a passive role and in order for activists to be encouraged to attend the Workshop it is necessary to make the experience more exciting and vary the nature of the activities. Theorists prefer situations which have a clear purpose and are structured. They like to have set plans, targets and organised content. They do not like activities which are unstructured. open learning, unlike traditional programmes, is not structured and therefore, in order for a theorist to benefit from an open learning programme, the facilitator would need to determine a structured action plan for the learner. Pragmatists were fairly well represented in the open learning workshops. They are unhappy if the learning is not immediately relevant to their needs or there are no clear guidelines. They are not so concerned with structure but rather with content and obtaining practical benefit from the learning. They see it as a means to an end. Reflectors were very well represented in the workshop. They like listening, observing, reading, researching and reviewing. This can be in a structured or unstructured environment. They are open to new experiences and can be very flexible. They are well suited to open learning workshops.

The results indicated that those learners with learning styles most suited to open learning were in fact the ones attending the workshops. This does mean that open learning workshops can themselves be seen to be a barrier for those whose learning style is not suited. However, action can be taken to encourage learners to work on their weaker style and thus allow greater participation.

Results of the telephone survey conducted between September 1994 and January 1995

Two hundred educational establishments - colleges of further education, sixth form colleges, community colleges, adult education centres in the north west of England and two hundred in the south east of England were involved in a telephone survey to determine the extent of open learning and open learning workshops in these two regions.

In the first place institutions were asked whether they had open learning. If the answer was no they were asked for reasons why. There were only 20 percent of institutions in the north west of England which did not have any form of open learning and 23 percent in the south east. The main reasons given for not having any form of open learning were the size of institution with no room for expansion, funds not available for setting up workshops, for purchasing materials or paying staff and a lack of interest.

In 1991 when the survey was first carried out it was found that there were only 38 percent of centres in the north west offering workshop facilities compared with 66 percent now and the south east had only 26 percent compared with 72 percent now. Almost all of the four hundred centres reported that with incorporation and the funding implications of the FEFC this has meant that institutions are now using open learning workshops (particularly for communications and maths skills) as a way of obtaining increased funding.

Access

Open learning workshops are either run as open access, on a bookable basis or as a combination of the two. Open access was only available at 51 percent of institutions in the south east but 89 percent in the north west. Centres in the south east maintained that open access would be difficult to manage as there would be problems of administration, additional funding required for administrative/support, difficulty in estimating number, limited resources which were needed for the more profitable full-time students. They were wary of problems that could arise if too many students arrived at the same time, or if too many students sought attention at the same time. Institutions in the south east preferred to exercise greater control on the number of students attending the workshops and to know exactly when and how many students were

going to turn up for each workshop session. This detracted from the sense of 'openness'.

Retention/Success Rates

Comparisons on retention and success rates between students on full-time, part-time or open learning programmes are not accurately recorded. Many institutions gave 'rough' figures but they did not give a true representation of what was happening. The dropout rate for traditional part-time/evening students was frequently put at between 25 and 30 percent and for some evening programmes, 50 percent. The drop out rate for open learning workshops was put at 2-5 percent.

When monitoring examinations results, students on traditional programmes take their examinations at the end of the programme on which they are enrolled and if they do not achieve, they are part of the 'failure' statistics, whereas an open learning student could take as long as they like to study for a qualification and are invariably only entered when they have a very good chance of achieving.

Conclusion

I believe that open learning workshops have a place in today's society. Research is appropriate at this time when there is much emphasis placed on economies rather than educational value and research will lead to a much greater understanding of open learning workshops and their role in providing adults with the flexibility that is needed access to 'life-long learning'. There is no doubt that open learning workshops are allowing many adults opportunities that they would not have been able to have.

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Knowledge in an age of uncertainty

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Introduction

Originally the working title for this paper was 'Astrology and Anxiety in Adult Education. This title refers to comments made in a seminar led by Robin Usher at the University of Technology, Sydney (Usher 1995). Usher suggested that, while participation rates in adult education programmes were at an historical high, adult educators seemed to be increasingly anxious about the state of adult education. He also told us of the demise of the School of Independent Studies at the old North East London Polytechnic (NELP) caused, at least in part, by epistemological disputes centring on the right of a student to undertake a research project on astrology as a legitimate field of study. In this paper I explore the issue of anxiety in contemporary adult education and suggest that the question 'What counts as knowledge?', at the heart of the astrological crisis at the NELP, is also a factor contributing to the current levels of anxiety in adult education. Recent OECD inspired educational reforms are being interpreted by many adult educators as privileging particular forms of knowledge over others and this in turn is seen as favouring some adult education 'traditions' over others.

Adult education 'traditions'

Disagreement about 'What counts as knowledge?' in adult education is not new. Indeed disagreement over this question has played its part in establishing the various adult education 'traditions' that now delineate the field (Foley 1995, 8 -15). The answer to the question 'What counts as knowledge?' has provided each tradition with a distinctive rationale and philosophy and has therefore assisted practitioners by grounding their educational practices within a formal, albeit contested, theoretical framework. Each 'tradition' has adopted, though by no means consistently, a position on 'What counts as knowledge?' and has therefore inherited a number of attendant theoretical constructs regarding the nature of knowledge.

Although recognising that commentators have conceptualised the different adult education 'traditions' in various ways (Brockett 1988, 183-184), for the purposes of this paper I will use the four traditions developed by Newman (1993) to describe adult education and training in Australia. He refers to them as the 'liberal', 'mechanistic', 'psychotherapy' and 'community development' traditions.

Briefly he categorises the liberal tradition as one that concerns 'itself with the pursuit of truth', and which typically identifies 'true knowledge' as being usually that 'found within the conventional university subject disciplines' (45). The 'liberal' tradition is non-vocational in orientation and, typically, emphasises the intrinsic value of learning for personal and intellectual development. By way of contrast he describes the 'mechanistic' tradition as being, typically, oriented to vocational education and training. The value of learning is largely extrinsic, focusing on outcomes to do with the successful performance of pre-determined tasks. The learning activities are structured, pre-determined and organised systematically. Though emphasising the vocational focus of this tradition Newman suggests that its characteristics can also be found in adult education and training that claims the 'liberal' or humanist mantle. The 'psychotherapy' tradition is described as adult education that sees 'personal growth' as its goal. Newman argues that this tradition has its roots in the psychotherapeutic techniques popularised in the United States in the 1960s. The development of human potential is the goal of this tradition and its processes are centred on group learning. The adult educator becomes the facilitator of learning. Games, role plays and simulations provide opportunities for 'experiential' learning. Communication and interpersonal skills are emphasised in the learning processes and are also associated with this tradition. The 'community development' tradition is Newman's fourth category. He describes it as having links with community work and political education and its goals are to empower people to understand, in a collective sense, their social and economic situation and take control over their own lives. The tradition attempts to integrate education with social action and draws on the theoretical work of Freire (1972a, 1972b) and Habermas (1972, 1985, 1989).

What counts as knowledge?

If Newman's descriptions are accepted they point to different conceptions about 'What counts as knowledge?'. The 'liberal' tradition privileges disciplinary knowledge over other forms of knowledge and has its intellectual roots in Cartesian rationalism and the positivist philosophy of Henri Comte. Cartesian rationalism takes as its starting point the supremacy of the human intellect and posits learning as an individual cognitive process. It regards certain subjects as having more value than others in developing cognitive ability. The possibility of intellectual theorising within these high status subjects is seen as transcending any particular social, political, cultural or linguistic milieu. Their qualities are found within the subjects or disciplines themselves and therefore require little by way of adjustment. Rationalists conceptualise education as guiding

learners into a pre-existing and largely unproblematic body of knowledge found within the various disciplines.

By way of contrast positivism rejects any notion of a *priori* knowledge formed independent of the senses and human experience. It accepts the fallibility of the human intellect and is therefore more tentative concerning knowledge claims. It does not refute the pursuit of 'true' knowledge but rather harnesses scientific method rather than the human intellect as the mechanism by which the veracity of hypothetical knowledge must be judged. Positivism argues that empirically derived knowledge is 'objective' in so far as it conforms to publicly agreed criteria and is therefore deemed acceptable by a 'community of scholars'. The answer to the question 'What counts as knowledge?' for both rationalism and positivism revolves around the issue of truth. Rationalism claims that the formal bodies of knowledge within disciplines have a greater claim to veracity because they have been examined by the court of human reason. Positivist claims to veracity, on the other hand, rely on the use of scientific method and its assertion to objectivity and neutrality. The traditional disciplinary subjects fall into one or other of these positions viz a viz 'What counts as knowledge?'

If in the 'liberal' tradition the learner is posited as being involved in the getting of someone else's wisdom, in the 'mechanistic' tradition the learner seems to disappear completely. According to Newman both knowledge and the learning process is seen as unproblematic in this tradition. Knowledge is selected not in terms of claims to enduring truth but in terms of its utility in achieving pre-determined goals. The tradition is found typically in learning programmes designed for vocational and organisational development purposes. Here 'What counts as knowledge?' is determined by the needs of particular industries, organisations or professional bodies. The tradition uses systematic approaches to identify the knowledge, skills and other abilities that people require to perform particular tasks. It draws on both behavioural psychology and systems theory and its influence can be found in almost all programmes that are vocationally oriented. In its extreme form, this systematic approach extends into the learning process itself. Learning objectives are set and carefully planned learning tasks are sequenced. Learners proceed through the programme using a step by step process and their progress is assessed continually. Superficially the tradition uses elements of both rationalism and positivism as it conceptualises the problems of content and process of learning as being amenable to a combination of rational thought and data collection using 'scientific' methods of investigation. In practice, the tradition also has a pragmatic perspective as to 'What counts as knowledge?' often basing its deliberations on purpose, utility and organisational benefit.

The 'psychotherapy' tradition rejects the claims to 'objective' knowledge that ground the adult education traditions outlined thus far. This tradition combines a view of the learning process as one that aspires to assisting the 'self-actualisation' of the individual learner with a view of knowledge constructed subjectively and uniquely by the learner. Here adult educators relinquish their role as the gatekeepers to knowledge and become the facilitators of learning. Their interest is in providing learners with experiences that contribute to 'personal growth' and the construction of meaning. Many hold a 'constructivist' view of knowledge arguing that knowledge can never be objective but is constructed uniquely by every individual. For constructivists knowledge is never passively received in an unmodified form but is actively created by the knower. The processes of knowing and learning cannot be seen as revealing an increasingly accurate, objective or 'true' understanding of 'an independent, pre-existing world outside the mind of the knower' (Lerman 1989, 211). An ontological world may well exist but it can never be objectively known.

The 'community development' tradition in adult education, while accepting many of the arguments used against positivist views of knowledge, denies the extreme relativism implicit in constructivist views of knowledge. This tradition emphasises knowledge as a social rather than an individual construction and therefore holds out the possibility that through collective negotiation of meaning the social world can be known and, more importantly, changed. The tradition places great importance on the social and contextual nature of knowledge construction. Knowledge is seen as the product of communities or other social groupings who share a common experience of the social world. Adult education is thus seen as the process by which groups of people come to understand and then act in their social world. In this tradition knowledge of the world cannot be achieved by individuals alone. Individual understanding is constituted by and in social relations. In order to reach an understanding of the social world individuals must engage in both a critical and self-reflective discourse: a discourse that occurs between people with a shared experience who negotiate how to act in the world. This position draws on the work of critical theorists who combine critical reflection with what Habermas calls 'communicative action'.

The postmodernist position questions the very legitimacy of the knowledge claims of the adult education traditions discussed thus far. It denies the possibility of any agreed answer being developed to

the question 'What counts as knowledge?'. Postmodernists argue that conflicting and irreconcilable knowledge claims are the only reality of the human condition (Vattimo 1988; Deleuze 1983) as there are no mechanisms by which the veracity of knowledge claims can be evaluated. Poststructuralists use the work of Derrida (1978,1985) to deny any reality outside of language. Life is text and text is fiction. Consequently all knowledges are fictional and none can be privileged over others. The poststructuralist position questions critical theory in terms of providing any credible argument for escaping the oppressive tendencies of language. Poststructuralists argue that language is representation and therefore immanently constraining. Postmodernism denies any escape from subjectivity be it in the guise of scientific method, rationalist theorising, hermeneutic interpretation or the communicative action of critical theory. Humanist values and ethics receive the same treatment; indeed for sceptical postmodernists (Rosenau 1992) such as Baudrillard (1983) that is the end of the matter. Nothing can be said of the human condition that either warrants or can licence any meaningful action. Affirmative postmodernists (Usher and Edwards 1994; Bagnall 1994) while accepting the thrust of postmodernist discourse allow the possibility of meaningful engagement at certain sites of human action. Their interest lies at the local level. They look to the specific as the site of action, not the general. They look toward the marginal and away from the central. They celebrate difference and avoid making any claims to definitive knowledge beyond the immediate site of its formation. By treating knowledge claims as text they look to the unsaid in discourse, arguing that this 'deconstruction' of text counters the tendency towards authoritative meaning which they claim is endemic to all modern views of knowledge.

Adult education and the 'new vocationalism'

The emergence of adult education as a strategic component of national economic policy has been labelled the 'new vocationalism' in education (Pollard, Purvis and Walford 1988, Ball 1994). Critics have, in their opposition to this development, often painted vocational education as being synonymous with the 'mechanistic' tradition outlined earlier, including its neglect of the learner, the learning process and the social construction of knowledge. They point to curriculum and assessment policy decisions made in vocational education as evidence of this orientation. This assumption is, however, problematic. Macdonald, Hayton, Gonczi and Hager (1993) have argued that there has been little 'fundamental and general-issues-based research in vocational education and training'. Very little is known about the ways in which adult educators working in this sector either conceptualise their knowledge or act in their educational world and more often than not their practice has been explained in terms of theories and practices derived from other sectors of education.

The preliminary results of a research project to identify 'What counts as knowledge?' for adult educators working in vocational education suggest that their relationship to the adult education 'traditions' outlined earlier is both partial and contingent. They are excluded from the 'liberal' tradition as their content knowledge is neither disciplinary in nature nor has it passed the test of veracity set by disciplinary knowledge. At best it is seen as interdisciplinary and derivative and as Wilson points out has been neglected by the 'liberal' tradition in university education. He also suggests that this neglect is caused, at least in part, because of the continuing influence of the vocational/general dichotomy in education. Teachers in vocational education, with no discipline-based theorising to legitimise their knowledge thus turn to the practice-based world of experience to validate their knowledge claims. The practice-based world of experience is regarded by teachers in vocational education as the crucial factor in their ability to teach (Chappell and Melville 1995). While recognising the constraints imposed on them by a 'mechanistic' curriculum teachers also augment the content of the curriculum with practice-based examples of knowledge that is left unsaid by the curriculum. In general, teachers do not regard vocational content as unproblematic. The learning process is also a negotiated feature of the practice of vocational teachers. The research produced many examples of the contingent nature of learning and the ways in which teachers altered the teaching-learning dynamic in response to the individual and contextual needs of individuals and groups. Thus elements of the 'psychotherapy' tradition are incorporated into the teaching and learning dynamic. Vocational teachers demonstrate a strong commitment to a utilitarian approach to education. Relevance and the aspirations of learners are given a high priority though this does not necessarily materialise as a 'narrow vocationalism'. Teachers nominate a range of personal and interpersonal skills that are incorporated into the learning process and also nominate cultural understanding, ethics and social consciousness as androgogical aims that they incorporate in their practice.

It seems that teachers working in this sector of adult education draw from and incorporate features of all four 'traditions' described by Newman. At the same time they operate with significantly different views concerning 'What counts as knowledge?'. They emphasise knowledge gained through experience over

knowledge gained through rational theorising. They also emphasise the contingent, particular and transient aspects of practice-based knowledge. Unlike the 'psychotherapy' tradition they are content-led yet adopt pedagogical practices derived from this tradition. They also appear conscious of the 'transformative' possibility of education during the learning process.

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Combining arts and adults: a reflection on a recipe

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It is the nature of reflections that they seem to have apparently unconnected beginnings: July 1995, I received a request to put into place a Quadrennial Review of the BA(Hons) Humanities and its pathways. October 1995, Delia Smith had a runaway hit with her television cookery series. Watching this expert in her designer kitchen demonstrate, with consummate ease, how to make one of her top ten casserole dishes, prefaced by a healthy but appetising 'starter' dish and culminating in the ultimate comfort food, steamed treacle sponge pudding and custard, I was struck by the variety of items which were governing her choice of menu, not only for one programme, but for the series as a whole. Viewed one way Delia Smith is promoting healthy wholesome eating, plus a little bit of the 'naughty but nice' for those who like to relapse into childhood occasionally. Delia, the perfect Mother, talking in measured tones, always calm, reassuring, the little smile to indicate a shared concern. Running alongside the image of 'mother as teacher' and all that this implies, is the vision of designer cooking, shown to be within reach of every consumer who can afford the ingredients. Delia is selling a dream of the perfect result every time, no effort, just instant success, for the modest cost of the licence fee and the book of the series courtesy of BBC Enterprises. Thinking now in terms of Delia as a very profitable, popular, marketable, distance learning adult educator, one wonders what financial constraints might have been imposed on her choice of curriculum design; however, a glance confirms that all the teaching equipment required is here, gleaming utensils and tasteful crockery are in ready supply in her dedicated teaching room. This comes as no surprise, given that the series is packaged around the known product of the Delia Smith name, a name which is tried and tested, and one which has become part of the mythology of the cookery tale; for Delia is not only a distance learning adult educator but part of the whole cookery series industry, where we learn through modern technology to absorb the cultural values inherent within the ritual of the preparation of food - food for the community. At this point it might be helpful to make some connections with semiotic analysis of film, particularly in relation to paradigmatic and syntagmatic choices in film-production:

> Roland Barthes was among the first to discern these kinds of relationship within apparently non-linguistic realms such as cuisine - the diner chooses from a paradigm of possible soups but then combines the chosen soup syntagmatically with other items chosen from other paradigms, for example, meat dishes or desserts - and fashion - one chooses between hats, but combines the hat syntagmatically with tie and jacket. Jean-Luc Godard's Two or Three Things I Know about Her (1967), in this sense, highlights not only the general semiotic wealth of human culture but also the paradigmatic and syntagmatic operations involved in film-making as a 'linguistic' practice. Godard's whispered commentaries - 'Should I focus on the leaves, or the sign?...Am I too close?...Is my voice too loud?' - point to the precise kinds of selecting and combining involved in making a film. (Stam, Burgoyne and Flitterman-Lewis 1992, 9)

Delia has choice to design her menu for the series, making paradigmatic choices for each programme and within each programme, but the meaning of the programme's cultural values become clear only when her choices are combined with the syntagmatic selection made by the producers of the programme: the design of the studio-kitchen, the lighting of the set, the background music, the choice of close-up or long shot. It is through such decisions which are made in the editing suite upstairs that we see reflected on our screen a package designed to attract middle class Britain, safe, respectable, wealthy, where the combination of all the choices creates a dream, a dream of a life-style. However, given that the dream is set within the context of a television service funded by the licence fee, and that it is an instructional programme on how to cook, it should perhaps include a little more realism, even given the fact that it is part of the arts of the country. A major finding of the Quadrennial Review is that education for adults in the arts is a desire to follow a dream.

As adult educators we create cookery courses, we make educational menus, we operate paradigmatic choices about what should go into our courses, and we select from other paradigms to combine syntagmatically with other modules to form degrees. In Sheffield we have the BA Humanities, and the period of its development covers one of the biggest changes in funding policies nationally in the higher education of adults; this resulted in a fundamental change in direction for the Division, from being a major provider of Liberal Adult Education, to becoming a provider of award-bearing part-time degree courses. Although I believe firmly in the menu

which we supply, it has to be said that the reason for its swift conception is rooted in the government's perception of adult education, and their dictates as to how it should be funded. Its educational menu was devised by using a mixture of new courses specifically designed for the degree to give a firm cohesive whole, and option choices drawn mainly from the Certificates in Combined Arts and Literary Studies. There is a wholesome academic central core to the degree of Literature, Linguistics, Philosophy and Social History, combined with the 'naughty but nice' options of music, art, theatre, film and creative writing. Initially we thought we had created a flexible degree, full of choice which would attract students and yet be academically rigorous, but in considering the curriculum design for the review, it became clear to me that we are restricted in our menu choice, not only by changes in national funding to accreditation, but also by student choice to undertake serious part-time study at all. The review concluded that the problems and strengths of our curriculum provision are located in two connected areas (Quadrennial Review, 1996, 6)

Self funding

As a Division we are not oversubscribed with fully-funded full-time students, we rely wholly on the local community deciding to pay for their own adult education which must, of necessity, be part-time study and which must compete for their attention with the rest of their lives. Therefore we have designed courses which we hope will appeal to students who wish to give serious attention to the study of arts and humanities, but which can also take place alongside the student's work or family commitments. The organisation of the degree, with its provision of timetabled core modules after work: 5.30 - 7.15, followed by evening option modules from 7.30 is an example of this.

The Mature Learner

Our students' needs drive both the curriculum and the organisation of the degree; for we recognise that the mature student has **choice** to spend their free time and money on what they want to get out of their education. A reasonable number of students have chosen to enrol for the named awards of BA Humanities and the certificates in Combined Arts and Literary Studies, and they told us at the entry interview that they chose to study with the Division because of the inter-disciplinary nature of the curriculum design and flexibility in the delivery of the course content. This is one of our strengths, and the design of the Humanities Degree is very popular with staff and students alike, as evidenced by the student questionnaire.

As Course Director I interview all potential students, and at that point almost all claim that they are interested in all areas of the degree, but it is when they look at the option choices that their imagination starts to work: it is as if they stand in a sweet shop. Many of our students are working in full- or part-time employment because in earlier life they made the 'right choice' to get the 'right job' and they have succeeded, but it is the lure of an arts degree which entices them to spend their own money and their own time (six years of time) to pursue their deep need to study for themselves without having to give up the day job. The need to express their thoughts and artistic emotions leads to a highly self-motivated student approach to learning; for they are a dedicated band of whom the report said:

> Despite the inevitable feelings of insecurity and lack of confidence which is common amongst adults returning to study, it seems that the mature learner who is committed to a degree programme does not want just to survive it, but also wants to excel in it, enjoy it, and they are determined to get the most out of their study because they feel that they are making up for lost opportunities. It may be that the amount of work and level of work produced by these mature learners would be the envy of our colleagues in internal departments. (Quadrennial Report, 1996, 9)

However, the wide variety in the degree can also lead to some anxiety relating to the inter-disciplinary teaching and the learning expectation of degree students:

> As individual members of staff are expert in their own areas it quickly became apparent that this in itself was presenting an interesting problem for degree students who study four main core areas (linguistics, literature, philosophy and social history). The student expectation at approaching each area was to feel that they too had to become very proficient in each area if they are to do justice to the course. Staff have needed to spend quite a lot of time explaining that we do not expect them to have the depth of knowledge that is applicable to a single subject degree, clearly they cannot do that while they are studying four areas of work. Instead, we expect them to make cross-curricular connections, and to accept that the Humanities degree is designed to operate in a horizontal rather than a vertical manner. (9)

Those who are presently in their third year are now beginning to make such connections, and appreciate the effect which one area of study has on another, but the report accepts that during the first two years the connections were not really recognised, and

that this factor may have contributed to some students leaving the course. Here it is important to draw on the statistical indicators gathered for the review and highlight their main conclusions:

Qualifications on entry

These reflect the age range accepted onto the programme. For the Certificates in particular they are non-standard and wide in their variability. For the Degree the expectation of higher entrance standards is clearer and reflected in the smaller number of students who withdraw from the programme.

Work Experience

The majority of the students work full-time or part-time, at the same time at taking sixty or forty credits per annum - the majority of student who leave do so because of conflicts between work and study commitments.

Personal Circumstances

is the next most common reason for leaving the programme, again this is consistent with mature people whose lives reflect their experience and external responsibilities.

Credit Accumulation and the Certificates

Students who manage to accumulate sixty credits are likely to complete in their second year. Students who only take twenty or forty credits often drop out because the end target of one hundred and twenty credits seems too distant.

Credit Accumulation and the Degree (six year programme)

Student feed-back indicates that those who have passed the Foundation Level One (two years study) begin to see the degree progression itself, and have indicated informally that completion of year three and progression to year four will be the bench mark. It seems that human nature plays its part, and the thought that they will have completed more than there is still to do, will spur them on to eventual success.

The Certificate in Combined Arts

has consistently recruited more students than the single subject Certificate in Literary Studies, reflecting perhaps the change in demand for the combining of subjects and an interest in performance modules, that is, theatre studies, film studies and creative writing .

Transfer of students

Both certificates lost students to the degree when it began in 1993 and have not regained their student numbers, indicating that courses which are seen to lead to the degree will recruit better than just study at certificate level. This has important implications for the Division in future planning, because the statistical indicators confirm informal feedback from students that it is the lure of a completing a degree, rather than a certificate which will encourage student enrolment. (10-11)

On completion of the review I began to wonder about some of our conclusions, of how and why we had reached them. That the team can justify their comments is not an issue, but rather, in what direction had we been led, perhaps even subconsciously, by the demands of the review which are governed by HEFCE requirements. Looking back I can see a concentration on enrolments and completion rates, perhaps to the detriment of other more philosophical elements, and on reflection I have wondered also whether we are really offering students an 'honest and truthful' educational experience, or whether we are selling them a pipe dream, an unobtainable feast. Like the construction of Delia's kitchen our courses are designed, edited and marketed to attract students, but if students fail successfully to cook the treacle sponge pudding, then what is our responsibility to that person who drops out? As suggested by the icon of Delia, we need to look to mythology, to the cultural and ritual meaning of sharing food together, and to question what the move to accreditation is telling us about the meaning of our society, of adult education and its cultural values.

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Stories we tell them? Teaching adults history in a post-modern world

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> I hate having to disbelieve people. I want to know what's what.[1]

Critical awareness of post-modernist ideas has emerged only belatedly among historians. Among teachers of the subject in continuing education, it is probably fair to say that they have had hardly any impact at all. I want to consider why this is so, and then review some aspects of the current debate about the nature of history as an intellectual activity, and finally suggest ways in which an awareness of them might shape how the subject is taught in continuing education.

History has long been a staple feature of adult education curricula. Whilst memories of studying the subject at school - especially for older students - are often negative, history has a proven track record as a recruiter in continuing education programmes. This has encouraged a situation in which there has been incentive to critical reflection. History tutors are largely isolated from each other. There are significant CE inputs into both the Society for the Study of Labour History and the Women's History Network, but the active memberships of both the Economic and Social History societies are almost entirely drawn from 'internal' departments. Only CE's local historians have a national network.

The normal mode of 'doing history' in continuing education derives - though we are seldom conscious of it - from nineteenth-century 'scientific' historical scholarship: to describe history as far as is possible 'as it actually happened'. However it is unreasonable to single out continuing education historians for criticism in this way. Historians within higher education (especially in Britain) are seldom critically reflective, instead operating through robust 'common sense' empiricism: 'the study of history, then, is the search for truth' (Elton 1967, 70). Awareness of the complexities of post-modernism has emerged only belatedly and responses of leading figures in the historical establishment alternate between condescension and hostility.[2] However, post-modernist ideas are potentially potent for undermining history's received wisdom. Three elements have particular implications (damaging or creative depending on one's point of view), especially for social history, which dominates continuing education programmes.

The first is post-modernism's distaste for 'grand narratives': yet so much history teaching - especially social history - explicitly or implicitly subscribes to such a narrative, either through a secularised form of Marxism, or a 'whiggish' idea of progress. A second disturbing element is the distrust of any claim that knowledge, language or categories derived from them are anything but subjective and relative. Class is a prime example of such a category, habitually and largely unquestioningly deployed in social history teaching. Within continuing education, historical abstraction and theorising have largely been structured around concepts of class, the currency of which in the wider historical field is now rapidly diminishing; little of this is mediated to continuing education students who continue to deal in the old certitudes. Thirdly:

> The deconstructive turn in contemporary thought is potentially the most damaging element of all: [It] puts all of history's taken-for-granted procedures into question, both as an intellectual discipline and as a literary (or writerly) mode. By placing inverted commas, metaphorically speaking, around the notion of the real, it invites us to see history not as a record of the past, more or less faithful to the facts, nor yet as an interpretation answerable to the evidence even if it does not start from it, but as an invention, or fiction, of historians themselves . . . Our continuities are storyteller's devices to give order and progression to the plot; the periodisation, by which we set such store, is a strategy for narrative closure (Samuel 1992, 220).

However, not all history is as naive as its detractors suggest. Historians aspire to tell the truth, without ever believing that they will do so; they are conscious that the evidential base is fallible and deficient, and that their use of it is necessarily selective (though the criteria for selection is seldom overt; here the post-modernist critique has real force); and however successful their efforts at empathy and

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1 Italicised passages in this paper quote members of the 1996 'Understanding History' class at the University of Leeds' Adult Education Centre, Middlesbrough. I am grateful for their permission to quote them, and for their enthusiastic participation in the course.

2 For example, Himmlefarb (1992) and Marwick (1995). A more considered, though in the nature of things still inconclusive, debate about 'the end of social history' is on-going in the journal Social History. Among English historians, Jenkins (1994) and Samuel (1994) are the fullest and most sympathetic commentators on post-modernism.

sympathetic reconstruction, historians freely acknowledge that their viewpoint is rooted not in the past but in their present.

All this, though, is by no means readily apparent to adult students. 'What is history? Retelling the past'. This is especially so for older generations schooled in an approach to history that was starkly empirical, in which 'doing history' was mainly a matter of learning chronology. 'I hated the presentation of history at school and I haven't had much idea how to approach histories from library shelves'. We perhaps underestimate the extent to which continuing education students inhabit a culture in which the veracity of the printed word - particularly when encountered as 'non-fiction' - goes largely unquestioned. (By contrast, television historical documentaries, tarred by the brushes of 'journalism' and 'entertainment', are much more likely to meet their critical scrutiny). Adults come to the study of history largely expecting that they will learn 'the truth' about the past, and in this way they aid and abet tutors steeped in 'common sense' empiricism. Both see the main function of their course as supplying missing knowledge: about areas of history schooling ignored; about a region or locality, historical interest in which derives from residence there; about a familiar subject, concerning which continuing education provides 'new' (that is, recently researched) knowledge. Most students readily appreciate that previously unknown or unexploited source material, or new techniques of analysis, will alter history. Most can therefore be persuaded to put down long-cherished textbooks and take up new ones. On the other hand many find the conflicting interpretations that are the stuff of academic history confusing. A course whose primary emphasis is upon historical controversy can prove personally liberating:

> I believed it [history] was a simple narrative of recorded events; now I can appreciate it is a disputed and contentious area of personal and particularised interpretation.

But the introduction of post-modernist scepticism about the epistemological status of historical knowledge, and therefore about the veracity of any interpretation of the past, can be profoundly unsettling:

> All my preconceived ideas about 'History' have been squashed. The secondary school history which I thought was gospel has been cast aside - a good thing - but now I feel rather cynical about 'secondary' source historiography. How can we believe what we read?
>
> I previously thought history was written fact, which did have some bias; but I now feel somewhat bewildered and unsure about anything I read.
>
> Some of my cherished illusions have been shattered.

There are difficult moral issues here; how far should a tutor actively unsettle students in this way? But arguably continuing education history has too often projected a safe, comfortable image, and made too many concessions to the student that wants to know 'the truth' about the past. continuing education is largely market-led; there is always a danger that a class will turn into a group of retro-tourists, passively consuming stuff about history. Apparently effective teaching can result in not very effective history; what a tutor says may acquire an authority yet more persuasive than the printed word, especially in shorter courses which leave little time for students to develop confidence in their own critical judgments, and in which a premium is placed on delivering information. Furthermore, accreditation can hinder opportunities to engage with students in a critical and reflexive consideration of the historian's practice. Assessed work has to be completed and quality assurance procedures observed. Syllabuses can become prescriptive: a schedule to be 'learnt', rather than a framework within which to explore the subject.

Historians in continuing education work at a disadvantage - compared to colleagues in higher education - in that students' exposure to historical study is restricted, in intensity and duration, compared to undergraduate degree programmes. Although they may eventually take several history courses, students approach each one as a discrete package. The accumulated knowledge and expertise that the experienced student brings with them is factual and, in local history courses particularly, methodological. However, few tutors, even if able to do so, would presumably wish to preface each of their courses with an examination of the epistemological status of historical knowledge (and, one suspects, the appeal of any course devoted to the latter would be highly restricted[1]

Yet there is much about the post-modernist cluster of ideas that both continuing education teachers and students might find attractive: iconoclasm, irreverence for received opinion, the wish to resist privileging some people, and/or their material and cultural productions, over others. The emphasis upon subjectivity and relativity in knowledge and language encourages critical reflectiveness. Qualities of

[1] For an interesting suggestion of what total immersion might involve, see Jenkins (1966).

empathy, and often active engagement, which adult educators have typically brought to their work can legitimately be made more overt. 'History is basically a contested discourse, on embattled terrain wherein people(s), classes and groups autobiographically construct interpretations of the past literally to please themselves' (Jenkins 1994, 37). However, taken to an extreme this view threatens to instil feelings of hapless relativism:

> Before the course I took history as what was written by prominent historians in text books. Now I am not sure I'll ever know any 'truths' about the past - simply stories written and interpreted by historians. . . Even though I find all the conflicting ideas of historians stimulating I feel it makes me wary of studying history further.

Yet the post-modernist turn in historical thinking is consistent with a central objective of continuing education history courses, namely to empower students to do history for themselves, rather than simply consume other people's versions of it:

> There is much more to history than I realised before! The possibility of there being many different stances/interpretations of history makes it much more exciting than I had thought previously.

However, as this paper has already hinted, accreditation and the drift to shorter courses arguably hinder continuing education's capacity to empower history students; and enforced immersion in modern philosophy of history far from providing a solution may prove no less counter-productive. But there are potential solutions, none of them particularly novel. That chronological survey has its uses few would deny; but too many courses seem to consist of little else. Routine use of documentary sources is one way of demystifying what historians do - though usage has to be more than simply illustrative. Project work in which students utilise these sources is another; but to work effectively there has to be realistic scope for creative input, rather than - as too often happens - the student simply lifting the bones out of one graveyard and into another.

More broadly, the textualisation of history opens up greater scope for interdisciplinary approaches to the past. If history's status as a 'discipline' looks faded in a post-modernist light, the value of historicised understandings of the human condition can still be defended. Sensitivity towards the complex relationship of theory, generalisation and evidence has always distinguished the best historical work, and receptiveness to post-modernist ideas ought to encourage both self-reflection and consciousness of the value-laden and slippery nature of language - desirable features of any adult educational activity. However, a greater degree of generosity is required of historians, for example, to admit categories of 'knowledge' generally held to lie outside the historical canon. A prime example of this is historians' resistance to modern historical fiction. Provided it transcends pedantry, a critique of a historical novel can considerably enhance historical understanding. However, historians tend to dismiss modern fiction, which is ironic, given the often naive use they make of, for example, Victorian novels. Feminist scholarship, uninhibited by disciplinary boundaries, has given greater weight to literary forms, especially that part of it which focuses on race and ethnicity; but the feminist imperative is still little felt in conventional history.

Similarly, post-modernism's demystification of history's evidential base ought to consolidate historians' awareness of the uses of non-documentary sources. 'Our whole training predisposes us to give a privileged place to the written word, to hold the visual (and the verbal) in comparatively low esteem, and to regard imagery as a kind of trap' (Samuel 1994, 268-9). continuing education long ago pioneered the use in historical research of vernacular architecture, landscape features and oral reminiscence; but autobiography, a conspicuous development in adult basic education and creative writing, has been ignored by continuing education history. Meanwhile, all but early medievalists remain heedless of material culture. The teaching of art history remains almost hermetically sealed from history 'proper', while historians use visual materials largely uncritically, seldom contemplating whether photographic 'evidence' they use was contrived in a 'painterly' fashion.

Historians' discomfort in the face of the visual extends not just to original sources but also to visual and material re-presentations and re-creations of the past. Mindful of the character of much of the 'heritage' industry, one might argue there is to feel uncomfortable about. Yet for the vast majority of adults it is from 'heritage' (theme parks, historic houses, 'living history' museums) not 'history' (researched publications, continuing education classes) that ideas about the past are constructed. Historians' widely disparage this situation, but seldom seek to redress it. Still less do they question why their discipline's hold upon the popular imagination is so slight, or contemplate what educational merits there might be in 'living history'.[1] The published outputs of historians are neither the only reconstructions of the

[1] Samuel (1994) is a conspicuous exception, and has been roundly condemned for it, for example, by Patrick Wright, 'Heritage clubs slug it out', *The Guardian*, 4 February 1995.

past, nor the sole ones with any claims to merit. Rather than simply disdaining it, the teaching of history within CE could profitably seek a closer engagement with the heritage industry, with the aim of stimulating its students to a more critical and reflective consumption of museums and 'heritage'.

In championing local, landscape, oral and women's history, continuing education has been a notable force in altering perceptions of what history should be about. However, continuing education's assimilation into the mainstream of higher education places its historians in a position of jeopardy, in which there is a perceived obligation to mimic yet further the conventions of British historical scholarship. Historians in continuing education are in danger of selling students versions of history which - though critically rigorous within their own terms - convey nothing of the extraordinary state of intellectual flux as historians at last react to post-modernist ideas. Historians in continuing education can ignore these ideas, and become either subordinated to a largely conservative higher education history sector and/or see what they do become a species of retro-tourism. Or they can engage with them, and use them to critique their own practice as historians and teachers.

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Offering you a lifeline ...

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Historically, quilts have served a number of purposes. Alongside their obvious practical use, they have been part of the social interaction of communities. Quilting bees offered a space for women to work and talk together, whilst the product of their labour was often given as a gift from the group to the newest members of its community, at birth or on marriage. Lives at a personal level were also sewn into the very fabric of the quilt, using as they did the remnants of clothing and household fabrics seen and known in a different context.

The idea of the quilt representing aspects of people's lives is, therefore, not a new one. However, Jan Seller's research, which was explored at the Life Histories and Learning Conference at the University of Sussex in 1994, suggested ways in which it could be an appropriate metaphor for a working life. In her paper *Quilting A Life History*, Jan describes how 'in using this metaphor, my primary focus is on adult women's careers and on related activities'.

As participants on the postgraduate diploma in adult learning and life histories at the University of Sussex, both as facilitators and students, we have explored 'the importance, in theory and in practice, of recognising and affirming the distinctive features of each individual's learning and education experiences, and of the cumulative impact of those experiences upon life courses, identities and possible futures' (Thompson 1995). The quilt metaphor continued to engage us.

We would, therefore, like to invite colleagues attending the conference to take part in a piece of participatory research exploring their educational and professional life histories. Information collected from a simple questionnaire will be used to create a 'quilt' that visually displays our lifelines, and we hope will form the focal point for discussion of common threads and themes that may emerge, and the significance they have for our identities as adult educators and researchers.

Email conferencing: creating and maintaining a virtual community

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Fragmented by technologies[1]

The emergence of the internet as a potential medium of communication raises a number of issues, not least among them, whether the sense of community that may arise in face to face interaction will be possible to replicate in virtual space. In other words, will computer mediated communication (CMC) allow people, who may be distant in time and space, context and culture from one another, to manifest some or all of the characteristics of groups in physical and temporal contact?

There does seem to be some evidence to support the view that the various channels of CMC (email, synchronous and asynchronous fora) can help sustain links that already exist. Friends and colleagues find email readily accessible - if you are an academic, or you have a phone and a modem, but that is another story. Often thought of as an emergent register (Ferrera *et al* 1991) email communication possesses neither the formality of written correspondence nor the immediacy and ethereal nature of telephone conversations, but does have some significance for its regular users (see for example, Miller 1994). There is also evidence to suggest that moderately successful interaction can arise from the increasing number of computer-mediated courses that build on initial intensive face to face contact and lead to asynchronous forms of communication on agreed themes. (Fowell *et al* 1995; CMC in HE Newsletters; Walther in press).

What this paper originally intended to do was to report on the extent to which it has been possible to make use of some of this potential in order to create a community among a diverse group of adult education students and faculty based in two institutions, one in the UK and the other in the USA. However, the literature and some early empirical and anecdotal evidence combined to confound initial expectations, and it became necessary to re-examine some of the foundational thinking about notions of community and interaction, as well as cyberspace, before considering the extent to which the process might be considered effective as a form of international community building.

Of space and the social[2]

Notions of community are fairly elusive, but they tend to possess qualities of relationships; shared tasks; a sense of 'self' in relation to 'other'; interdependence; and belonging. Conventionally, and because of the difficulties of maintaining essential communication over distance, they also have some shared space, often with clearly identifiable boundaries. Etzioni called this the 'I and We' paradigm:

> the idea that both individual and community have a basic moral standing; neither is secondary or derivative. [...] The We signifies social, cultural and political, hence historical and institutional forces, which shape the collective factor - the community. (Etzioni 1991, 137)

This has powerful resonances in some sections of western society, and seems to hark back to a 'better' premodern era before the alienating impact of rationalism, industrialisation and urbanisation. The image is of a traditional life, characterised by regular, personal contact among friends. Modernism, however, corrupted this (Jensen, 1990) and postmodernism - of which the internet is a feature - somehow appears to offer an opportunity to recover its qualities.

Central to the notion of community is interaction amongst its membership: normally the exchange of ideas, thoughts, feelings, manifested in language, but supported by a wide range of paralinguistic features. This does not preclude silence, which will have significance later, but at least the idea that if there is silence, it has some shared significance, as in this case:

> For the English Quakers of the seventeenth century, both men and women, the refusal to speak when others expected them to marked an ideological commitment. (Gal 1991, 175)

Under normal social conditions, however, there is an expectation within a community that interaction of some kind will take place: that people will willingly engage in social exchange and maximise their roles within the social economy (Miller, 1993).

However, both of these definitions fall short of lived experience. The sense of community is an expression of romantic idealism from before the impact of the modern, before the world became 'despoiled by overdevelopment, overpopulation and time-release environmental poisons' (Robins, 138); in Blake's cosmology, 'Jerusalem'. Similarly, social interaction as depicted above, ignores the often brutal reality of intragroup behaviour with all of its

[1] A paraphrase of Marshall McLuhan paraphrasing William Blake who 'in a word, sees man as fragmented by his technologies'.

[2] According to Steven Jones in 'Cybersociety': the missing ingredients.

manifestations of authority, dependence, flight/fight, (dis)enchantment, etc (for example Luft 1970).

Furthermore, in order to explore the potential to replicate those existential intentions of interaction in face to face communities, it is necessary to examine some of the peculiar characteristics of what Rheingold (1993) and others call 'virtual community' or 'nonspace'.

Antinomy

In the US syndicated cartoon 'Cathy', the character is experimenting with online chat and subsequent email. She identifies, however, a particular feature of cyberspace interaction when she asks herself:

> Do the same rules apply to online relationships, or is there some whole new secret set of rules that we can only figure out through a brand new series of personal humiliations?!!

The capacity that users have to import their normative understanding from other social contexts is hardly surprising given that they are the product of contingent social experiences over years. Learning the new, when there are no clues other than what is in text form on the screen, is a source of understandable caution. Attempts to create 'netiquette' do not prevent 'flaming' - aggressive and hostile communication - or its threat , that often forces others into silence (see also lurking).

Atomisation

The Panopticon creates the capacity to see and not be seen, or in the context of cyberspace, to read and not be read. The corollary of this all-seeing eye is isolation within, and atomisation of, society. What cyberspace has the capacity to create is the reduction of the mass to individual social agency. There are two dimensions to this, but with the same outcome: in the one, the (over)use of a technology to eliminate face to face interaction (Lajoie 1995, 154) when face to face is both possible and desirable; and in the other, 'in the effort to bring others closer together, network technologies have placed a distance between people in the same location (*ibid*).

Carnival/Mardi Gras (see Antinomy)

Carnival, in those countries that celebrate it, is a time when the 'normal' cultural rules do not apply. Indeed, if there is a rule, it is that normal cultural rules do not apply. The capacity for this state to exist in cyberspace is always there in its potential to disrupt.

Decentralisation

The anarchic nature of the Internet, with its millions of individual users and its thousands of loose associations (listservs, usenet groups etc) has made the notion of control an impossibility, even if it were desirable. It has been described metaphorically as a cloud (Nguyen & Alexander, 1996). The significance is two fold: one is the uncontrollable nature of cyberspace; and the other, its lack of focus and order. It is multi-dimensional and polyvocal and it has lost temporal linearity.

Disembodiment

The manifestation of 'self' and communality in cyberspace is mediated entirely through text, and in some sectors, this has been seen as among its strengths. As Clark puts it:

> Concepts of physical beauty are holdovers from MEAT[1] space. On the net they don't apply. We are all just bits and bytes blowing in the phosphor stream.' (1995, 124)

What this has led to is a range of re-embodiments and re-inventions: participants, particularly in chat lines, engage in gender bending (Spender 1995), changing age, name, identity, and creating 'bodily' images to suit whatever purpose.

Hyperpersonal communication (see intensification)

Joseph Walther argues that there are three forms of communication in cyberspace: impersonal, interpersonal, and what he calls hyperpersonal. The two former are also manifestations of behaviour in face to face communication, but hyperpersonal communication is a consequence of the slow, but inexorable growth of interpersonal communication that arises from asynchronous communication. It happens when:

> users experience commonality, are self-aware, physically separated, and communicating via a limited cues channel[2] which allows them to selectively self-present and edit; to construct and reciprocate representations of their partners and relations without the interference of environmental reality. (Walther in press)

Impersonality

Particularly in task-based communities, this seems to have a positive effect in that it gives the group more time to deal with the instrumental task in hand (Walther in press). As Phillips and Santoro report:

> computerised communication steers users away from consideration of irrelevant interpersonal and theoretical issues by focusing attention on the process and content of problem solving discussion. (1989, 152)

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1 Cybertalk for the physical body.

2 Text only - without paralinguistic features.

This is a consequence of a decline in social presence, manifested in face to face communication by physical appearance, style, accent, mood, charisma. The other outcome is the potential for overt hostility of the kind unlikely to be found in face to face interaction, and characterised by Walther as uninhibited and depersonalised behaviour.

Intensification

In conditions of face to face communication, the feedback loop provides senders and receivers with just enough information to keep the communication lines open. Because of the capacity to censor messages in ways not possible in face to face communication, the images of self are more carefully and selectively sent and perceived. The consequence of this is what Walther calls an 'intensification loop' and while it is normally thought of as confirming favourable qualities, it also has within it the capacity to do the opposite.

Little narrative

In the same way that autobiographical writing has the capacity to give voice to the voiceless, cyberspace can provide users with almost unlimited narrative space and a potential audience of millions. As Katz wrote:

> technology is breaking down the notion of few-to-many communications. [...] the big idea behind cyber-tales is that for the first time, the many are talking to the many ... they can be their own producers, agents, editors and audiences. Their stories are becoming more and more idiosyncratic, interactive and individualistic, told in different forums to diverse audiences in different ways. (1994)

While this may be a contribution towards the democraticisation of media within modernism, it is also a rejection of the tyranny of the modern through expressions of 'incredulity towards metanarratives, especially that of progress and its variants deriving from the Enlightenment' (Poster 1995, 91). The potential for the centre not be able to hold is already apparent through what are seen as the proliferation of little narratives.

Lurking

To lurk is to cope with some of the difficulties of being in cyberspace: to be present but not to participate by writing. As Argyle says:

> ... lurking is participation by watching without revealing your presence in the group. The catch is, others may not know you are there, but you know you are, and so you are as involved as they are. You are still part of the group. (1995, 137)

This is, I believe, the dominant form of behaviour on many lists.

Ownership

Despite some attempts to address legal and intellectual ownership of the contents of cyberspace, this continues to be complex, if not increasingly so, as it begins to challenges notions of originality. As Spender, quoting Dorner, writes: 'As any self-respecting deconstructionist will tell you, any text is the product of other texts'.

Representations of self - 'On the Internet, nobody knows you are a dog'[1]

Despite Rousseau's claims otherwise, (Rousseau, 1953) the representation of self is an uncertain enough adventure in any form of text, (see, for example, Marcus) and in cyberspace, there is little difference. Indeed, the very anonymity of cyberspace occupancy can create the potential for an even bigger capacity for what Feenberg has called 'highly controlled forms of self-presentation'. He goes on:

> The 'I' who presents you with the 'me-as-text' is not exactly the same 'I' who appears in face-to-face encounters.' (Feenberg, 272)

Listservs and international adult education

The association we had in mind from May 1995 was one comprising students and faculty from two departments of education, coming together on a listserv, primarily to extend the notion of a community of scholars in adult education, but also with the specific and more instrumental idea of identifying common research interests. A listserv database was set up and there was agreement that it would be facilitated, at least in the first instance, in order to overcome some of the difficulties associated with bringing together two diverse groups of people separated by 4,000 miles and five time zones. This was thought of as no more than ice-breaking activity: to give people the chance to 'hear their voice' in the 'space' that we had created between us.

At this point, it became clear that the intention to seek other than an analogy to face to face interaction was going to be a transparent necessity. The characteristics of cyberspace identified above conspired with other more mundane matters (recruitment, induction, familiarity) and some less so: the main one being the much slower speed that CMC achieves (see also Walther in press). Far more significant was the nature of the opening activities. In order to overcome the problems associated with serial recruitment (that, in fact, stretched over a four month period), the first, informal task was to write a brief

[1] One dog to another in P Steiner cartoon, *The New Yorker*, 1993.

biographical statement and to locate the self within the adult education community. Over twenty people completed this activity. Following that was to be the first community-building activity, based on an activity described by Brookfield (1990), to write a critical incident account about a successful experience either as a student or as a teacher, during the previous year. Less than 15 people completed this embargoed activity and there was a delay then as I tried to work out what direction to go in, given the apparent failure of this first activity. The listserv continues to be facilitated on an episodic basis.

At the time of writing, it is fairly quiet: volume of traffic varies but rarely exceeds three messages per week. There is some evidence to suggest that lurking is the predominant activity. But only three people have left the listserv, one because of a work move which will deprive her of access to email. Anecdotal evidence tells me that people are writing one-to-one; that there are some hesitant discussions about listserv activity that take place face to face. I also see some evidence of the atomisation theory: that there is a stiffness about those discussions that does not manifest itself in other deliberations.

It was naive to assume that an alternative typology would emerge readily from extrapolation of face to face interaction. Community in cyberspace is quite different but the precise characteristics have yet to be identified. That will be the task for the remainder of the project.

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Performance, quality and community in adult continuing education[1]

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This paper is a response to the challenge of diversity and disagreement within adult continuing education. I want to consider the question of professional values: 'what should I be doing and for whom' was the question asked by Mee and Wiltshire (1978, 10). The answers given then were couched in terms of community, participation and compensation.

These credos were important to people and informed a host of movements over the last twenty years. In 1996 we occupy a different intellectual universe driven by the concepts of performance and quality. I am interested in exploring whether it is possible, as a practitioner, to occupy these two universes simultaneously. In this paper I refer to an array of techniques and technologies of measurement which I shall call the Quality Game. I want to see how far the Game can be expanded and to then consider the kind of new legitimations that evolve for adult continuing education practice. Having pushed the Game as far as possible, I will then reflect on some of the ramifications of having got there.

First I must explain the rules of the Game. Here we can imagine the predicament of an adult continuing education practitioner from any sector circa 1990. Some source, imaginary or otherwise, may have made a statement about the 'need for accountability' or the 'importance of being able to demonstrate value for money' (VFM). An often heard remark in educational settings or at national agency conferences was 'if we don't come up with some measures of performance then they will be imposed upon us'. Better to be measured against criteria of your own choosing. The next step is to get hold of a manual. An excellent guide is *First steps in measuring performance in the public sector - a management guide* (Jackson and Palmer 1989). To get started some new tools from an economist and a management consultant are going to be needed. To capture the performance of your organisation a set of steps are required. Here is a sequence from an adult contniuing education performance manual:

> decide what it is to be measured and who will measure, what data is to be collated and how, what standards of performance are expected and tolerances, ensure adequate resources, inform all parties on the purpose of the exercise, collect and analyse data and finally identify unsatisfactory cases and report (NIACE 1989, 6).

Somewhere in this process a performance indicator (PI) is made.

The term 'tolerances' rings a discordant note. Are we to take a slide rule and set it against social life? The stock response to squeamishness was of this order:

> So important is the concept of outputs that even a simplistic approach to this difficult area is to preferred to none at all. (Carley 1988, 10)

This familiar pragmatic message has worrying implications: perhaps to measure any data is better than to measure none; or it may be saying that perhaps 'measure' is a bit strong and if it is, then 'indicator' is a fallback. Let's leave that for now. It will be clear now what I mean by the Quality Game and what the appropriate moves are. However, there are other precursive steps before the Game can start which bear on this discussion. Before the performance sequence can be completed the adult continuing education organisation or sub unit has to be modelled by analogy with the process of production: inputs, processes and outputs require definition. I refer to this as the Model which reveals a causal relationship such that for a given bundle of inputs (for example raw leather) fed into the system then a specified number of outputs (boots) will emerge. The reflective practitioner may wish to question the idea of educational production. Marsh advises as follows:

> New language, such as that provided by the production model of quality control, offers new perspectives and provides a base from which to explore, to rethink stereotyped or irrationally held views. Is education not production? Are we not changing base materials into something else? Granted that further education starts with a kind of product and not raw materials and can be seen as a value added process. (Marsh 1982,184)

Making the performance model work in adult continuing education

Let us take Marsh's advice and put to one side the irrational credos of my first paragraph and explore the new language. There is plenty of new language available but practitioners may prefer to learn it from a human context rather than from production/operations management. Colleagues in the Health Service have

[1] This paper is based on doctoral research in the Division of Adult Continuing Education, University of Sheffield under the supervision of Professor W Hampton.

already seen the light so I propose to mine that seam. I provide below a set of working performance categories that draw on Quality Game expertise in health and in subsequent adult continuing education, further education and higher education settings.

We need to ask the following questions: is an adult continuing education service successful? who benefits? how do we measure the outcome? We can equate a health 'service' comprising an array of tests, procedures and treatments with a learning programme defined as all the student's learning activities leading towards their primary learning goal, which involve the use of the resources of the institution. Two elements of outcome present themselves: subjective outcome, that is, patient or learner satisfaction with service or programme; objective outcome, that is, Quality Adjusted Life Year (QUALY) or course success/qualification. There is also a literature on unaccredited learning outcome dealing with competencies and capacities but it was buried by the Audit Commission and Ofsted (Audit Commission/Ofsted 1993) which restricted success to qualification outcome. Satisfaction outcome was also perhaps too intangible to survive. Qualification, unlike the other outcome measures, can be recorded at the smallest meaningful level of outcome, usually the level of a module. The Model is facilitated through this concept of qualification size in that it permits quality control at a greater number of points of passage. To size, we can add the concept of value. This reminds us that learning outcome did not drop out of the picture altogether; through Open College Frameworks local and idiosyncratic outcome can be ascribed a credit, thus extending size and value to the diverse realms of adult continuing education. A capacity to quantify outcome is emerging around the criteria of proportions of initially enrolled students achieving the intended qualification.

We have now added to the model the further performance characteristics of size and value; to these can be added a sense of improved accuracy. Qualification outcome fails to capture 'the distance of travel' of a learner when we compare initial level of achievement with the final outcome; assessing this value added effect allows for the input an institution makes to learner development during the programme. This measure is reflecting a more elastic interaction within elements of the Model rather than the customary input/output relation. Value added achievement is seen to be more equitable in that 'distance of travel' is making comparisons on a fairer basis. Outcome can now be measured against criteria of size, value, distance, and equity (accuracy). As all these aspects of the Model are put in place we are finding that the overall instrument becomes capable of finer tuning; given size, value and level, it is possible to allocate resources more flexibly. Our model can now add time and flexibility to the list of performance categories. Inevitably the final category is cost. Once again Ofsted and the Audit Commission make the breakthrough. This unique partnership of agencies works together to relate cost and outcome and make intelligible to us the notion of a Value for Money Curriculum. We have always had traditional auditing of education but bringing together cost and course success and thus comparing costs of raw achievement date with value added data breaks new ground.

This is what it means to play the Quality Game in adult continuing education. It requires expansion and implementation of the Model. As I have shown this is possible even for such a diverse sector but it requires a number of moves to complete the Game. The moves constitute a concept of performance in adult continuing education composed of key categories. The Jackson/Palmer manual dealt with the ABCs of performance in the public sector. We have moved far beyond such rough and ready texts but the main aspect to be applauded is the arrival at a generic unit of outcome. In the late 1980s some of the PIs being dreamed up by adult continuing education providers were a case of 'if it moves measure it'. In further education the Further Education Funding Council took the final step and created a funding unit. A course or part course is worth 'n' units that can be cashed once produced. A unit is worth around £16.00. We can now align size, speed, accuracy and value with money. Here lies the interest in the analogy with health: putting a cash value on a hip operation still defies planners and the unit of outcome is ever elusive. In further education we can now price outcome at the smallest level that pleases us. We owe it to the health QUALY for showing us the way.

The reflective practitioner is to exchange the original Mee and Wiltshire credo for performance categories. The underpinning categories of the Model are efficiency and effectiveness and these are the most likely form for professional legitimation in contemporary adult continuing education. These terms are summaries of the categories that I have outlined. They do not set the world on fire and have none of the resonance of the traditional slogans. Effectiveness and efficiency make practitioners into artful dodgers as experience in the USSR has shown. Once the target indicator is reached everyone gives up or finds eccentric routes to the monthly or annual performance target. Students of performance will know the Soviet cartoon depicting a huge nail extending the length of the factor - 'the factory has reached its target in tonnes for the whole month'. Imagination turns to thoughts of passing through for payment different treatments of the same patient or presenting multiple outcomes for the same learner. Here Quality enters the picture.

What is Quality? FEU had a good answer to this: we have Quality when the FEU curriculum development model is working on its best behaviour (FEU 1987, 6). This adds little. We need a more objective approach so that the element of quality can be discretely identified and measured. They can then be merged without existing performance categories. Perhaps though, Quality is a discrete entity. For the deeper side of Quality we must turn to the guru of quality whose famous 14 point statement on Total Quality includes 'create the new philosophy'. His guideline 4 is 'eliminate numerical goals and quotas' thereby unlocking the dilemma of the huge nail (Deming 1986, 26). Total Quality (TQ) is about continuous improvement and delighting customers.

I will now try to expand the model to embrace 'community'. So far I have concentrated on the interaction of elements of the Model to create performance categories for adult continuing education in the form of speed, value and so on. My final commentary deals with the Model in its wider external reference. Consider the UK Model for TQM: this is the Model mutated into an advanced form of the Quality Game itself. Gone is the talk of inputs, outputs and production function. Instead the model has only two elements: 'in' (enablers) and 'out' (results) where results include 'impact on society'. Impact on society reintroduces the Value Added debate; community impacts are 'added' by business in the form of environmental and other partnership effects. Think of this as the Quality Game at the level of the organisation. A further move in the Game at this level is the most refined thought of all: Quality Communities (Partain 1992). This form of thought is an extension of Deming's Quality guidelines to community settings. Community Quality initiatives can engage the energy of government, schools, social services, hospitals, as well as business and industry. Deming has therefore supplied a category for colleges and communities to define themselves with TQM. The Quality Game is complete.

Conclusion

I want to go back to the question I put to the reflective adult continuing education practitioner of the 1990s. I reintroduced the Mee and Wiltshire credo of the 1970s to see not only if it has endured but also if it was possible to continue to assert it in a new context. To comprehend the new context, I constructed the Quality Game as a tool for looking at modern credos as a source of legitimation. I have shown it can work; a set of categories have merged which feature size, level, speed accuracy and flexibility. I then went on to add quality and finally community. I found that the Game can be made to work, although some moves, even if not empirically grounded as intelligible, certainly are intelligible as QUALYs (where death is worth '0'!). We end up with the Working Model and a set of categories for adult continuing education expressed as performance indicators usually calculated by ourselves. Jackson and Palmer were among the innumerable architects of the Model and, for them, the Game is complete when cost benefit analysis can begin; cost benefit reasoning requires a common unit of outcome which is achieved through FE funding units; the final unit of outcome is money. Quality looks like a new departure offering an escape from the Model but it is simply another category (devoid of content) to add to flexibility and value. Community is now also a TQM instrument.

It is appropriate to conclude with the term 'instrumental'. Practitioners engage with the Game on a piecemeal basis. The metaphor of the Game is now a trivial one; it explains the difficulty a reflective practitioner has in finding a working critique through which to reassert the value of the original credo. It is impossible to criticise effectiveness and flexibility within the Game; it is like arguing against 'healthy eating'. This is perhaps what Habermas has in mind in *Towards a rational society*. Going against technical rules, or strategic categories that have emerged as practitioner credos within the Game are those of Habermas's instrumental reason, specifically those of efficiency and effectiveness and - less obviously - quality. This is why the simple and pragmatic agreements that I began with which permit the Model to emerge now seem critical. Looking to the future we can learn much from Local Community Quality Councils in the USA which address economic decline and competitiveness.

We have moved a long way from the values we expressed in response to the question posed by Mee and Wiltshire.

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'Back to the future': development and diversity of reflective practice in nurse education

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Introduction

The aim of this paper is to discuss the experiences of two facilitators, and through them, the experience of a number of postgraduate student teachers undertaking a reflective practice module as part of a taught Masters course in Health and Social Care Practice. The nature of this experience has meant looking back in order to gain insights into the future.

In this paper we suggest that there are some useful analogies about the use of reflective practice from the film *Back to the Future*. We will also discuss the appropriate literature to underpin the growing feeling of development and diversity in this field. In addition, comments, opinions and advice from students will be used to illustrate the points being made.

The MA(Ed) course is an initial teacher preparation programme for nurse/midwife teachers. The United Kingdom Central Council for Nursing (UKCC) requires that practitioners who wish to undertake nurse/midwife teacher preparation must be graduates, and have a specified amount of post registration professional experience. Council also stipulates that initial nurse/midwife teacher preparation programmes must be approved by the English National Board for Nursing (ENB).

The notion that reflective practice should have a central place in nurse/midwife teacher education, is clearly set out by the ENB in their curricula guidelines:

> Reflection in and on practice is an essential component of pre-registration programmes, and qualified practitioners continue to develop the skills of reflective practice through continuing education. (ENB 1994,13)

The Reflective Practice Module is therefore a required core module for students undertaking the MA(Ed) teacher preparation course. As module tutors we had to conceptualise our views about reflective practice, and where these views came from. We also discussed at length how we should work together, to facilitate the student teachers in their (and our) attempts to get to grips with the concept of reflective practice. Our students are novice teachers, but highly experienced practitioners, and in this core module our aim is to help the students to develop an analytical stance of the rationale underpinning their clinical practice.

Definition of Reflection

The word 'reflection' originates from the Latin verb 'reflectere' which means bend or turn backwards. The term is used broadly with a common meaning that does not seem to have changed much over time (Bengtsson 1995). This meaning has, moreover, the big advantage that the core meaning of the term corresponds with the core properties of reflection.

Bengtsson highlights four basic aspects of reflection: reflection as self-reflection, reflection as thinking, reflection as self-understanding and the distancing function of self-reflection. He also succinctly notes that reflection is today on everybody's lips, and this has created the paradoxical situation that 'reflection' is often used in an unreflected manner.

Reflection in learning is not a new idea, indeed it is akin to Aristotle's concept of deliberation (Elliot 1983). Dewey also discussed the problems in 'forming habits of reflective thought' (Dewey 1933). This is supported by Boyd and Fales (1983) who see reflective learning emphasising 'the self as the source of learning and ... therefore inherently an individual and ipsative process'. They also suggest that:

> reflective learning is the process of internally examining and exploring an issue of concern, triggered by an experience, which creates and clarifies meaning in terms of self, and which results in a changed conceptual perspective. (99)

They feel that reflection is a natural process used spontaneously by many people and as such is not a new concept, but that its present significance lies in reflection as a 'paradigm shift' in professional learning from experience.

In addition, Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985) define reflection as:

> a generic term for those intellectual and affective activities in which individuals engage to explore their experiences in order to lead to new understandings and appreciations. (33)

This model emphasises the affective aspects of learning and how these may facilitate or hinder reflection. Feelings throughout the experience are of fundamental importance here, and Boud *et al* also highlight the relationship of these to past experiences.

The importance given to the affective nature of learning also emphasises its individuality, and therefore the control must always be with the learner, with the teacher acting as facilitator, with access only to such information as the learner wishes him to have (Boud *et al* 1985). This is similarly emphasised in Knowles' work, where he places great stress on the building up of trust between learner and teacher (Knowles 1990).

Reflection, then, provides an opportunity to think about practice, to identify what is satisfactory and what is in need of improvement or validation. This is summarised by Van Manen (1995): 'the solution to good practice lies in conceptualising a reflective relation between theory and practice' (43).

With the above definitions in mind, we would suggest that there are some useful analogies about the use of reflective practice from the film *Back to the future*.

In this film a young teenager called Marty befriends an eccentric inventor called Doc Brown. This mad cap professor steals some plutonium and uses 'scientific theory' to transform a Delorean car into an inventive time travel vehicle. Doc then proceeds to show Marty how the time travel machine works, and stresses that at the crucial speed of 88 miles per hour, the 'car' will transport the driver into a different time zone.

Marty accidentally reaches this crucial required speed to move the vehicle from the present time zone, back to 1955. Whilst back in the past time zone Marty discovers that any interaction with his past will have a serious impact on his future. In true Spielberg style, everything turns out fine by the end of the film. However, Doc Brown categorically states that this is not the end, the story is to be continued by going back to the future again.

Our comparisons from the film with reflective practice

The first of these comparisons concerns the vehicle which was used for time travel. This was a very stylish car, illustrative of what was considered to be very in vogue for its time. Two points arise from this; firstly the 'vehicle' or 'tool' of reflective practice is currently much in vogue in education and in nursing for both educators and practitioners today. This is highlighted by Darbyshire (1993) who voices his concerns that because reflective practice is very much the flavour of the day, it is in danger of becoming the latest fashion victim on the nursing catwalk. This was certainly true of the Delorean car whose demise was widely reported in the popular press.

Secondly Marty was given explicit instructions about how to use the vehicle by its designer, but operating the machine became solely his own responsibility. We feel that this mirrors the way in which we work with our students. We consider that our role is coaching reflective teaching as described by Schon (1988, 19):

> Through advice, criticism, description, demonstration, and questioning, one person helps another learn to practice reflective teaching in the context of the doing. And one does so through a Hall of Mirrors: demonstrating reflective teaching in the very process of trying to help the other learn to do it.

The term used by Schon is 'reflective supervision' in which the coach helps, provokes and encourages a teacher to reflect on practice. He also points out that in reflecting on practice one often finds vulnerability, anxiety and defensiveness. For Schon, surprise and puzzlement are at the heart of reflective teaching, but this does not mean having a 'right answer, at least for a time. Similarly Wallace (1996) supports this in her ongoing research about nurses, by concluding that 'there is no single right way of thinking'. It may even mean foregoing the possibility of a 'right answer'. For our students this meant foregoing the security in thinking that there is one answer.

We also found that our students felt that in this module we were asking them to 'break the rules'. There was definitely a prevailing belief that one should know, that there are right answers, whose source lies outside oneself. This belief was reinforced from their previous experiences of professional and academic programmes.

Unlike Doc in the film, we did not design the 'tool' of reflective practice which we require our students to use. Therefore, we attempt, alongside our students, to conceptualise its use and use the approach suggested by Brubacher *et al* (1994), this being not to view reflective practice in a hierarchical manner (Van Manen 1977), but rather to focus instead on elements that appear to play significant roles in fostering reflection and reflective practice on the part of classroom teachers.

In addition, we used the research of Sparks-Langer and Colton (1991) who argued that there are three such elements: the cognitive, the critical and the narrative elements. The cognitive is concerned with the knowledge of decision-making in practice; the critical element with the moral and ethical aspects of social compassion and justice; and the narrative element being the students' narratives. Students were required to keep a private learning journal for recording incidents in practice, and to develop one of these practitioner incidents to be submitted as their summative assignment for the module.

We also use our own experiences and the plethora of available 'models' to demonstrate how the 'vehicle' could work, in the belief that 'a particular method or strategy that works for one person may be a hindrance to another' (Palmer *et al* 1994, 91).

Evidence that this approach is helpful comes from the student evaluations; for example, one student advised others to 'enjoy being led along and then make your own way'.

Another point of interest for us from the film, is that Doc Brown seems to use 'scientific theory' to build a vehicle which is able to transcend the existing rules of time and space. This appears plausible to the audience as it appears (in true Spielberg style) to be based on the laws of physics.

Comparing these 'scientific laws' to reflective practice James and Clarke (1994) posit that models of reflective practice have an appeal at a fundamental level, because they ground practice in established theory and frameworks in which to operate. They also identify that 'implicit in the status currently being given to reflective practice in nursing is an accepted view that reflection will lead to better practice and to greater competence' (86).

From our experience in exploring reflective practice together with our students, we would concur with James and Clarke, in that this approach has led to an increasing questioning of our practice as teachers, together with a tentative increase in confidence, in our facilitation of reflective practice with students. We are undecided whether this is due to the processes we ourselve undergo as we attempt to practise reflection, or whether we recognise our experiences coming to life as we become more familiar with the literature.

In addition, we believe that analysing the various frameworks provided in the literature (Gibbs 1988; Johns 1992; Carper 1978; Atkins and Murphy 1993) together with our students, assists them as they attempt to grapple with the difficult process that is reflective practice. Evaluation from the students supports this view; for example a student commented that 'it provided something concrete to refer to when it all seemed too much'.

In the film Spielberg makes use of the term 'temporal displacement' to explain a gap in the time space continuum, and also to explain events which were a result of Marty's interactions with his own past. The term 'temporal displacement' is a useful analogy for the uncomfortable feelings described by Atkins and Murphy (1993) as being the first stage of the reflective process. Similarly, Mezirow (1981) used the term disorienting dilemma as an essential element in perspective transformation.

Feedback from our students would appear to reinforce the above views as exemplified in the following student comments in their formal written evaluations when asked what advice they would give to other students about to start the reflective practice module:

> Watch where you walk some of it is thin ice.
>
> At times the group were very irritable about reflective practice. I know I was.
>
> Do it! Be prepared to have your ideas shaken about.
>
> I went through a complex learning process through this (reflective practice) module and it has certainly made me look at a lot of things from a new perspective.

With regard to futures in the education of adults, there are similarities with the film again, in that Doc Brown cautioned that encounters with the past 'could screw up the future'. In a similar vein Wallace (1996) cautioned that there should be an awareness about 'potential mismanagement' when teachers choose to use reflective practice to aid critical thinking. However, in our experience, this is not necessarily the case. This view is supported in the literature by Killion and Todnem (1991) who argue that reflection for practice is the desired outcome of reflection. We undertake reflection, not so much to revisit the past or to become aware of the metacognitive processes one is experiencing, but to guide future action. In other words, reflection for practice is in essence proactive in nature.

For Killion and Todnem the process of engaging in reflection for practice should be seen, not as a linear one, but as an ongoing spiral in which each of the elements of reflective practice is constantly involved in an interactive process of change and development. It is also suggested that reflective practice can have an effect on the individual's future. For example, Boud *et al* (1994) identify that

> by relating current experience to past experience, the learner builds up a rich network of interconnected memories, which in turn can provide access to alternative behaviour in the future.

Finally, it has been our experience that 'it is the process of learning that is important; there is only the journey never the destination' (Brew 1993). As we seek to develop our own reflective practice skills, we become even more acutely aware of the development and diversity for the use of reflective practice in adult education. However, we have also become increasingly aware of the potential for mismanagement unless handled with great sensitivity and care. If we are not to 'screw up the future' we have a responsibility to ensure that our student teachers understand these implications by experiencing the process of reflective practice. We also hope that they understand, to use the words of Steven Spielberg, this process is 'to be continued'.

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Changes in British university adult education[1]

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Introduction

Education, as a part of the whole social structure, can never be developed in isolation but is always reflected and influenced by political, economic and other factors (Fang 1988). University adult education, as an important component of the education system, is not an exception. In accordance with changes in its socio-economic contexts, British university adult education, in particular the management model and the direction of provision, has changed, and will continue to change. However, before we anticipate the future of university adult education, it is necessary for us to review changes in the past.

Definitions

There is a Chinese saying: 'Though a thing is definable, the definition is changeable'. The definition of a term can be changed alongside the changes in time, space and socio-economic contexts. In line with socio-economic development, adult education has developed. The definition of adult education, therefore, should also develop. In 1949, the international conference on adult education at Elsinore, organised by UNESCO, accepted the narrow British definition as forms of education 'without *direct* regard to their vocational value' (Hutchinson 1949, 54). In 1976, however, UNESCO drafted a recommendation on the development of adult education, which stated:

> ...the term ''adult education'' denotes the entire body of organized educational processes, whatever the content, level and method, whether formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools, colleges and universities as well as in apprenticeship, whereby persons regarded as adult by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications and bring about changes in their attitudes or behaviour in the twofold perspective of full personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development ... (UNESCO 1976, 160)

Such a broader definition has been widely accepted by many countries. For instance, in China, adult education has now been used to cover various types and levels of organised provision of education and training for adults, including literacy classes, primary, secondary and higher education for adults, technical training in the countryside and factories, and professional continuing education.

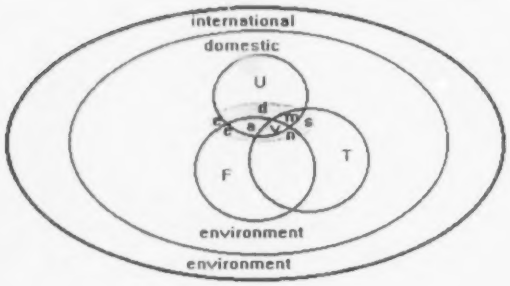
In Britain, in the famous *1919 Report* (Ministry of Reconstruction, Adult Education Committee 1919, A3), adult education was narrowly defined as education 'other than technical or vocational'. Owing to its Great Tradition, the definition of 'adult education' in Britain was and often still is taken as a narrow synonym of liberal education without accepting new contexts in practice. To respond to the international broader definition, however, people have been using another term, 'continuing education', to complement the narrow traditional definition of adult education in this country. Now it has come to a point that the term 'adult education' has been seen as so negative that many people just want simply to give it up. For instance, the name of the Universities Council for Adult Education, which was changed into the Universities Council for Adult and Continuing Education in the early 1980s, has now become the Universities Association for Continuing Education. Therefore, if we continue to be bounded by the narrow definition of adult education, British university adult education, which used to be interpreted as extramural studies, seems to be dying. However, if we accept the broader definition of adult education by UNESCO, British university adult education, in fact, can be considered to have grown enormously.

Contexts

With the broader definition, the pattern of British university adult education and the context in which the present university adult education exists could be illustrated by the following diagram:

[1] This paper is based on my doctoral research. I am grateful to those interviewees who have contributed to my understanding of changes in the education and training of adults in this country. I am also grateful to Emeritus Professor William Hampton, my supervisor, for his supervision of my research and for his discussion and comments on the paper. Special thanks are extended to Kevin Longmore and Danny Mashengele for discussing the ideas in this paper with me; other colleagues in the Division of Adult Continuing Education, University of Sheffield, in particular, Mrs. Cheryl Hunt, Professor Geoff Chivers, Mr. Geoffrey Mitchell and Dr. David McConnell for their comments on the paper; Miss Anne Marie Hynes, Ms. Hazel Hampton and Mrs. Mary King for being critical friends during my study; Zhou Hailiang for his continuous encouragement and support to my study.

Diagram 1: British university adult education and its contexts in the mid-1990s

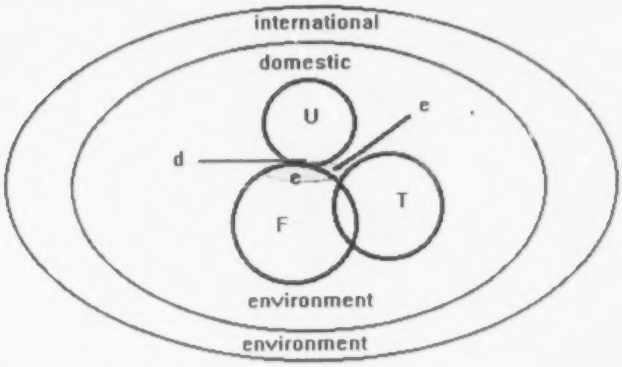


Notes:
F = further education
T = training
U = university mainstream
a = access courses
e = traditional extramural studies which have strong links with communities
d = degree courses taken by mature students, either domestic or overseas
n = training courses with NVQ outcomes or leading to jobs
m= modular courses leading to degrees
s = non-certificate short courses in continuing vocational education
v = continuing vocational education with certificates of access to higher education.

In the above diagram, the dark pattern in the centre represents British university adult education in the mid-1990s. As Chris Duke (1995) argued, university adult education now covers three aspects: first, liberal education; second, continuing vocational education; and third, courses leading to degrees. As the diagram shows, whilst liberal education, the traditional extramural studies, has now become a decreasing proportion of provision, university adult education has been largely extended to cover many other aspects of education and training of adults linked to vocational purposes. This pattern overlaps within three sectors: university mainstream, further education, and training, which are now becoming closer and overlap, and the whole pattern, as Richard Taylor (1995) suggested, is moving towards the centre of the university mainstream.

This pattern, of course, is very different from that of three or four decades ago. University internal work devoted itself to elite higher education and research, and was separate from further education and training. Extramural departments, which were in isolation outside their parent bodies, 'devoted themselves almost exclusively to the provision of liberal studies' (Universities Council for Adult Education 1961, 22). As we can see from Diagram 2, there was almost no connection between the university sector and the training sector, although there was some attempt at promoting post experience courses.

Diagram 2: British university adult education and its contexts by the early 1960s

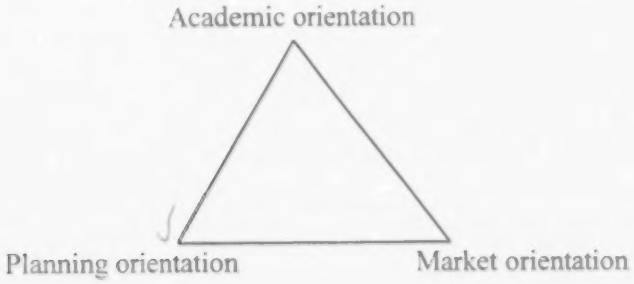


These changes did not happen overnight: they occurred gradually in the past decades, more rapidly in the past few years. The main driving force behind these changes has been socio-economic changes in both international and domestic environments.

Management Model

As Diagram 3 shows, the management model of education and training of adults could be illustrated as a triangle with orientations towards the three corners: academic orientation, planning orientation, and market orientation.

Diagram 3: management model of the education and training of adults



In the academic orientation, where the principle of the service provided might be termed as 'I would serve what I said': courses are provided according to academic interest, where providers have powers to provide what they like. In the planning orientation, 'I would serve what they (state) said': courses are provided according to Government requirements, where the Government has powers to decide what courses should be provided. In the market orientation, 'I would serve what you paid': courses are provided according to buyers' demands and requirements, where customers have powers to decide what courses should be set up. In practice, however, the management model of university adult education is always a combination or mixture of these three models, which could be illustrated by one position within the triangle that could move in line with the changes in socio-economic contexts.

As we know, alongside the changes in socio-economic contexts, Government funding policy on education and training has been changing. In the movement of market testing services, contracting-out and bidding systems have been introduced into the funding system: the Government has now become the biggest buyer of education and training. In both further education and university sectors, institutions have now to bid for funding to deliver their provision. In the training sector, the training market has been formed and developed. While the private sector has been growing, the public sectors, both further education and university sectors, have also entered the training market to compete with the private sector and each other to sell education and training to employers, individuals and to the Government. As Geoff Chivers (1995) suggested, in such a buyer-led market, courses are provided according to the buyer's or customer's requirements. Meanwhile, when the Government becomes the biggest buyer, the Government uses funding as a tool to justify its planning of further education and higher education. Courses, to some extent, have to be delivered according to the state's requirements. This implies that, to some extent, the management model has also moved towards a planning orientation in both further education and higher education sectors.

As discussed above, university adult education is now overlapping the university sector, the further education sector and the training sector. Whereas the management models of these three sectors have been moving towards a market orientation and, in the cases of further education and higher education sectors, to some extent, towards a planning orientation, the management model of university adult education, has also moved towards these two orientations. Meanwhile, as a result of abolishing the status of Responsible Bodies, the academic powers have decreased and the management model of university adult education has been moved further away from the academic orientation. Consequently, the management model of British university adult education has been moving away from a position which used to be closer to the academic orientation, towards another, which is now closer to the market orientation and, to some extent, closer to the planning orientation.

Impacts

It is important for us to recognise the impact of changes in the management model on changes in the direction of provision of university adult education. In the market orientation, different buyers or customers have different interests. In terms of the Government, education and training is seen as a tool to improve the national economy. To respond to increasing international competition, it has prioritised education leading to qualifications as well as vocational education and training, which have closer links to economic development.

Evidence shows that employers tend to buy short-term training courses for their employees (Park 1994, 57). There are several reasons. First, short-term training would normally bring in quick benefits for enterprises without too much investment. Second, although long courses may bring in more benefits, with the increasing rate of job mobility, employers are unwilling to put all their eggs in one basket: they don't want to take risks. Third, as long term education has traditionally been seen as a Government responsibility, employers are quite reluctant to carry such a heavy burden.

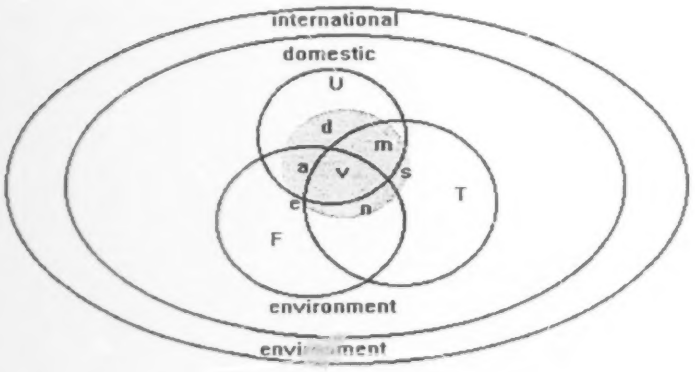
In terms of individuals, it is also evident that, increasingly, in contrast to employers, they are more likely to invest in long-term education leading to qualifications. With accelerating rate of change, to avoid unemployment risks, more and more individuals seek qualifications as an investment for security of their jobs and for better future careers. In the labour market, as qualifications have now been recognised as the assurances or proof of personal qualities and abilities, they have become passports to better careers. With such a special value, qualifications, to some extent, have now become currencies in the labour market. Increasingly, individuals as customers or buyers, therefore, would prefer to buy long-term courses with the aim of achieving qualifications.

As the management model is moving away from an academic orientation towards both planning orientation and market orientation, the Government, as a planner as well as the biggest buyer, has many more powers to decide the direction of provision, whilst providers have decreasing powers. Clients or customers, either employers or individuals, also have increasing powers to decide what courses should be set up. As a result, the direction of provision of university adult education has been shifted away from traditional liberal education, in which academic thought was important to personal development, towards vocational education and qualification education, which the Government thinks are important to economic development, which employers think are important to their enterprises, and which young people think are important to their careers.

The future

From the above discussion, we can identify the changes in British university adult education: the pattern has changed, the management model has changed and the direction of provision has changed. Will these trends continue in the future? The answer will largely depend on the trends of socio-economic changes in the future. With the continuation of the international mood of privatisation, with the continuing Government policy of privatisation, society as a whole will more or less continue to move towards a market orientation. As a part of the social system, university adult education will be no exception. Consequently, the management model of British adult education will continue to move towards the market orientation. Meanwhile, as long as the Government continues to be the largest buyer of education and training, the element of planning orientation will continue to remain. This also means that academics will continue to have decreasing powers whilst customers and buyers, including the Government, employers and individuals, will continue to have increasing powers. If this trend continues, the direction of provision will continue to be dominated by vocational and qualification education, which customers would prefer to buy. Liberal education, which will rely on either self-financing or community support, will continue to decline. In addition, with the increasing competition under the market orientation and with a general increase in demand, the three sectors, university, further education, and training, will continue to interpenetrate each other: the boundaries between the sectors will be further blurred and they will move towards each other and will become even closer than before. As a result, apart from extramural studies, which will continue to decrease in size, all the other sectors of university adult education, and university adult education as a whole, will continue to expand.

Diagram 4: British university adult education and its contexts in the future



Further discussion

Now the questions will be: What would be the profound implication of such fundamental changes? What would be the social consequence if liberal education, which has an important contribution to not only individual development but also social development, continues to decline? In the case that, increasingly, individuals tend to buy qualifications rather than to seek education, would educational quality be affected as academics continue to have decreasing powers and clients continue to have increasing powers? Under the pressure of the market, would academics maintain their status and academic freedom without being affected? How far would and could university adult education move towards the market orientation? To what extent, would education become a commodity? All these questions need further discussion.

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An historical perspective on future developments and diversity in British adult education[1]

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During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries Britain evolved from an industrialising into an industrialised and then into a post-industrial or post-modernist society; and from an early nineteenth century *laissez-faire* state into a mixed-economy welfare state. More recently, attempts have been made by ideologically 'New Right' governments to roll back the interventionist structures of the welfare state in order to create an enterprise culture and replace dependency by self-help. Adult education has been caught up in these ideological shifts because at different times it has been expected both to contribute to the support structures of a welfare state and to equip people to survive in a self-help culture. It has been regarded as a means of enhancing both collectivism and individualism. This has frequently led to a confusion of roles and purpose.

Much of nineteenth century British adult education was aimed at the working classes, for a variety of reasons: to incorporate them into bourgeois society, to produce a more efficient work force, to alleviate the alienating effects of industrialisation, or to assist them in their struggles for social justice. But it very often ended up being colonised by the middle class. Despite this, it developed a strong tradition of social purpose and a belief that adult education could and should contribute to social and political action. It also demonstrated a strongly liberal, non-vocational bias and male ethos, reflecting the culture of the nineteenth century educated class; and was predominantly voluntaryist, although the limitations of depending solely on voluntaryism became more apparent as the century progressed, and state support increasingly was sought and provided to rescue adult education from permanent impermanence.

In the twentieth century a plethora of reports, white papers and educational legislation, as well as numerous independent bodies, government agencies and semi-government quangos, have all in their different ways attempted to plan, promote, develop, direct, re-direct, or co-ordinate adult education. One of the consequences of all this activity was the securing of adult education as a permanent phenomenon, but it also led to much closer incorporation within the state and to much more state intervention. More recently it has resulted in the gradual conversion of the adult education **movement** with a distinctive social purpose into a **service** (although whether this is a service to the participants or to the state is unresolved). This state involvement has been both a cause and a consequence of increased state funding of adult education, which became a very important means of support and influential factor during the twentieth century.

The early local education authorities (LEAs) adopted a semi-vocational approach to adult education inherited from the late nineteenth century technical education committees, leaving the more prestigious non-vocational adult education to the 'responsible bodies' (RBs). This division of labour fostered a notion of partnership between the LEAs and RBs which was sometimes fruitful but at other times more honoured in the breach. More seriously it contributed to the continuing separation of vocational from non-vocational provision, and for a long time condemned the LEAs to a perceived lower status in the field of adult education. The expansion of LEA adult education after the second world war was real if sporadic and uneven. From the mid-1970s, many responded to the Russell and Alexander recommendations by giving greater emphasis to provision for disadvantaged groups, but their increasing financial difficulties forced them either to cut back on much innovative work, paradoxically making adult education less accessible to the 'disadvantaged'; or to introduce a two-tier service with provision for the well-off who could afford to pay the steeply rising fees, and for the 'conspicuously deprived' who were targeted by a compensation service. There was a widening gap between these two extremes, and an increasing number of people were unable to benefit from the restricted provision.

The 1988 Education Reform Act and 1992 Further and Higher Education Act reduced the significance of the LEAs, leaving them with no more than residual adult education responsibilities unprotected by earmarked funding, resulting in severe reductions in many areas although conversely, the further education sector was able to expand its provision of schedule 2 work, with a greater emphasis on vocational and utilitarian values. These changes have actually increased the opportunities for some categories of learners while excluding others (particularly older learners and many women) who do not want basic education or utilitarian further education or certification and progression.

The WEA has undergone a considerable metamorphosis during the course of the twentieth century. For much of that time it enjoyed a powerful, even privileged, position within the world of British

[1] This paper is an edited version of the final chapter of my forthcoming History of Modern British Adult Education (NIACE, 1996). I wish to acknowledge my debt to all the contributors to that book.

adult education, although its early aims - to promote university education for working people through a voluntary organisation - became somewhat fudged if not altogether invisible. Since 1992, the location of the WEA within the further education sector has given it a new lease of life, enabling it to undertake some of the work with the 'disadvantaged' that it had been rather unsuccessfully struggling to do for many years. This is optimistically viewed in some quarters as providing new opportunities for the Association. An alternative assessment would be that the WEA has become wedded to an alien ethos which may coincide with the Association's aims for now but which might prove more uncomfortable in the future; and that there is a fatal mismatch between its growing centralisation and subservience to the FEFCs on the one hand, and voluntary member autonomy on the other.

The first half of the twentieth century saw a decline of the old university extension movement but a corresponding rise of the tutorial class movement in partnership with the WEA, but after the second world war the universities used their joint funding (from the UGC and the Ministry of Education) to consolidate their position and to some extent cut the ties with the WEA. University extension re-emerged as an alternative to the joint tutorial classes. This represented a move away from many of the values of the tutorial class movement, particularly its targeting of the working class and also its commitment to 'social purpose' adult education. This was seen by many as the demise of a 'great tradition'. There was a growing emphasis on more vocationally orientated continuing education - a trend which was accelerated with government approval and funding incentives during the 1980s, and by the abolition of the universities' RB status with their transfer to the UFC and later to the HEFCs. Whilst this brought academic respectability for university adult education by finally bringing it into line with other forms of higher education, it probably marked its end as a member of a separate and distinctive social movement. It has become just part of the mainstream of higher education, with no distinction between university adult education students and other part-time higher education students studying for university awards: in effect a modular, part-time mode of lifelong learning within higher education. Whereas this could be considered a crowning victory for mature students, it is less obviously beneficial to the many adult students who want serious, university-level courses but are not interested in accreditation or progression.

The appearance of the polytechnics and the Open University (OU) on the scene in the late 1960s and early '70s presaged significant changes in the world of adult education. The new polytechnics created increased opportunities for mature students to enter higher education on a part-time basis, although arguably this development (and the establishment of the OU in 1971) enabled the existing universities to ignore this sector for another twenty years. The OU not only opened up significant new higher education opportunities for adult students but also had a major effect on the introduction of a more flexible credit system throughout higher education, to the benefit of adult students. But it crucially diverted funding away from other fields of adult education in the 1970s and '80s, to their detriment. And despite its openness to students without qualifications, it has not yet resolved the problem of a significantly higher drop out rate amongst its less well qualified entrants. Moreover, its more recent determination to keep in the forefront of technological developments in distance learning threatens to reduce its accessibility to those poorer potential recruits who cannot afford the necessary hardware. There is a danger that it will reinforce rather than reduce the divisions between the educationally 'haves' and 'have-nots'.

The long term residential colleges, which shared many of the same early twentieth century aims and values as university adult education and the WEA, have more recently concentrated on an increasingly utilitarian preparation for work or for higher education, although the latter has been to some extent undermined by the very successful Access movement in further education and the Open Colleges. The short term residential colleges, which very largely grew up after the second world war, also face an uncertain future (those that have not already closed). They always existed on a financial knife edge, but their position has been rendered more precarious with the emasculation of the LEAs, many of which are no longer in a position to continue their support. This also applies to the non-residential centres.

It is arguable that broadcasting has been the major adult education agency of the twentieth century. Between the 1920s and 1990s it became increasingly dominant as 'the cockpit of culture' - a culturally unifying force representing middle brow, middle England. It fluctuated between its three roles as stimulant of adult learning; reinforcement of the work of the adult education bodies; and a self-contained adult education provider. It took new forms and experienced major changes over time including the use of printed materials in support of broadcasting; the advent of television; the abolition of the BBC's monopoly; and, in the early 1970s, the establishment of the OU and the adult literacy campaign. Recently, greater emphasis has been put on the general educative role, extensively reinforced by support materials, rather than educational programmes per se. However, the notion of public service broadcasting has been increasingly questioned, and with it the broadcasters'

obligation to educate. The 1990 Broadcasting Act removed this obligation from ITV. Commercialism has become more dominant and there is ever increasing pressure on resources and scheduling for educational purposes. Educational broadcasting (like the OU) has also become partially subsumed into the burgeoning 'industry' of educational technology and multi-medium systems and into the more comprehensive concepts of open and distance learning.

During the early decades of the twentieth century, 'independent working class education' (IWCE) was an attempt to promote adult education which was untainted by state funding and control. It was emancipatory, revolutionary education. But its chronic lack of funding had two fatal consequences. Firstly, enforced dependence on unpaid voluntary tutors resulted in some excellent teaching, but also in a lack of professional expertise. In time this undermined the pedagogical standard of much IWCE. And secondly, financial difficulties eventually forced IWCE into dependence on the trade union movement, and this proved just as illiberal and restrictive as dependence on the State. The trade unions and TUC became more and more prescriptive with the result that after the second world war IWCE had no real purpose and fell into terminal decline.

For all their limitations, the trade unions were the major social movement to become involved in adult education in Britain. Initially this was largely in collaboration with IWCE and the WEA, and later in partnership with the universities. But gradually the trade unions embarked on organising their own adult education. They increasingly favoured essentially practical instruction which concentrated on skills acquisition and how to participate at various levels of society rather than the development of critical consciousness of economic and political forces. In this incorporated rather than oppositional role, the trade unions attracted state funding for their educational activities during the 1960s and '70s. But with the advent of Thatcherism in 1979 this state funding began to be used for a different purpose: to exercise control over the form and content of trade union education courses and even to manipulate the trade unions into a subservient role. With the more recent reduction and eventual termination of this state funding, the trade unions are faced with the challenging but potentially more rewarding task of promoting adult education as a function of a voluntary social movement rather than as an agency of the State.

There are many voluntary organisations which provide opportunities for adult learning outside the formal, state-aided system. Indeed, a recent review of self directed learning among adults suggested that participation in formal classes, courses and programmes may not be as popular or as significant a mode of adult learning as more informal approaches (Percy, Burton and Withnall 1994). These may involve the concept of 'learning projects' identified by Allen Tough (1983), or less rationalistic and planned modes of learning activity, some of which are difficult to label as educational at all, but many taking place formally or informally in voluntary organisations (Percy, Burton and Withnall 1994, 37). Their great strength is that they reflect where the students really are rather than where professionals think they are or ought to be. Consequently these forms of learning are popular and the learners are highly motivated. Their weakness is that they can be patchy in quality, lacking coherence, unchallenging or, at best, as 'good' as the organisation's membership happens to be. Although very little is known about the real quality of this informal learning 'there are hints in the North American research literature of frustration among learners, resources not available, intellectual wild-goose chases, misunderstandings and misconceptions.' (*Ibid*, 38.)

Vocational education and training has fallen mainly within the non-funded category of adult education: most training for adults has been promoted by employers rather than the State, albeit on a somewhat random basis. However, more recently it has attracted some state funding and direction. Particularly since the 1960s, both Labour and Conservative Governments have sought to stimulate and reform adult training as part of a wider strategy of restructuring the economy and improving Britain's world competitiveness although the training solutions implemented have fallen well short of these ambitious objectives. Much effort was also put into training schemes intended primarily to reduce unemployment in the 1930s and again following the economic crises of the 1970s onwards. These schemes were often semi-punitive in nature and mostly aimed at younger adults. But in the later 1970s, as it became clear that deindustrialisation was causing major employment problems for all ages, there was a shift away from the concentration on youth training. By the 1990s there was a widespread consensus that continuous lifelong education and training was the single most important means of remaining competitive in a global economy. This greatly influenced training policies despite the lack of hard evidence to support this notion, and the real risk of a deterioration in social cohesion caused by the exclusion from this training of those who did not belong to well organised internal labour markets and lacked substantial initial educational achievements.

Adult education's attitude to women has been somewhat contradictory. For considerable periods there was a feeling that women were over represented in adult education. During much of the nineteenth and earlier twentieth century women were represented in

reasonable proportions in the student body, but curricula often tended to reinforce their unequal position in society. In the mid and later twentieth century women have become the majority in much adult education and there have been some attempts to meet their needs and interests more effectively. But there are now worrying indications that these improvements are being reversed.

As far as ethnic minorities are concerned, there is very little evidence of widespread attempts to recruit them or cater for their particular interests or shape the curricula to their requirements. Adult education has done very little to challenge their deprived position in society (Gidley, 1996).

Three generic themes thread their way through much of the twentieth century history of British adult education: the artificial division between vocational and non-vocational adult education; the identification of adult education as 'public' (i.e. state-funded) or 'voluntary' (non-funded); and the tension between the social concern to put 'really useful knowledge' to collective use in social action, and the liberal emphasis on individual, personal development and fulfilment. All three of these themes have sometimes been seen as simple dichotomies determining the curricula, pedagogy, organisation and resourcing of adult education. In reality they might more usefully have been treated as different but not opposite positions along the continuum of adult education.

Another characteristic has been the limitation of adult education's capability in eradicating all the inequalities and oppressions of society. Realistically it can only operate within the existing cultural and ideological parameters of society. It can contribute to changing the hegemonic culture and ideology but in practice it is much more likely to be incorporated into the oppressive structures of society and used to divert people's attention away from the causes towards the symptoms of inequality; or to identify oppression within a narrow, paternalistic and reductionist social class paradigm. It will then offer 'solutions' within that paradigm. In the past, these were predominantly identified as part of the class struggle.

Indeed for many years social class was a major preoccupation of British adult education. Much effort was expended in trying to recruit working class or 'educationally disadvantaged' students to many forms of adult education. For much of the past two hundred years it can be said that this was the single most consistent purpose underpinning British adult education. But in pursuit of this purpose, practice very frequently fell far short of intention. Most adult education organisations have been thwarted in this aim by the educated middle class consistently gobbling up many of the opportunities provided, and by the working class or 'disadvantaged' showing a stubborn lack of interest in much of what was offered to them. More recently, there has been a marked decline even in the intention of targeting the educationally deprived sectors of society. Adult education has increasingly reflected the more fragmentary ideology of post-modernism in locating most problems in the individual rather than in the nature of society and attempting to resolve them by meeting individual 'needs' or correcting their deficiencies.

It is arguable that in these fragmented, post-modernist 'New Times', adult education should be tackling its old preoccupations about equality, democracy, participation and social justice in new ways, engaging with 'the new social movements for peace, women's liberation, racial justice, gay liberation and green issues'. And that it should address the crucial concept of citizenship in a less restricted way which gives proper recognition to different identities, and which confronts the 'New Right' re-definition of 'citizenship' with its greater emphasis on social duties rather than rights (Westwood 1991, 49-51; Foley 1994, 125; Roche 1992).

History suggests that this new approach is more likely to emerge from an alliance between the less formal voluntary sector of adult education and the new social movements. Institutionalised adult education has, in the past, been more of a barrier than a facilitator to the involvement of social movements, with the partial exception of the trade union movement. This institutionalised adult education, closely related to the institutionalised structures of the modern industrialised state, would seem to have as doubtful a future as modernity itself. But history also suggests that voluntary effort unsupported by public funding and professional expertise experiences great difficulties in sustaining itself or preventing its standards of learning opportunities from declining to a low level. It has recently been suggested that the LEAs should turn themselves into professional support systems and facilitators providing neutral information, advice and guidance for the voluntary sector (Foster 1992, 10).

However, it is questionable how effective such support would be from an agency cut off from direct provision. Moreover, it does not meet the other major deficiency - financial support. The fragmenting tendency of post-modernism possibly offers more opportunities for community adult education to work with progressive social movements in order to develop a new radical agenda, forge more genuinely popular and democratic forms of education, and give a voice to groups which had become marginalised, or even silenced, by previous forms of adult education.

But in the British adult education context, the WEA is the organisation which has had most experience in attempting to combine voluntaryism with professionalism and public funding. As indicated

above, this has caused major tensions and conflicts in the past and more recently given rise to a crisis of identity for the Association. Nevertheless, a reformed model of the WEA, attuned to the fragmentary post-modernist culture of the twenty first century, is perhaps what is required, not just for the WEA but as a general model for adult education organisations for the future. They will need to be popular and informal but also professionally knowledgeable and supported by access to public funding which is not too closely tied to immediate political whims and fancies. They should 'build...on adult education's tradition of people's knowledge as opposed to expert knowledge, of participation as opposed to instruction, and of collective and collaborative learning as opposed to individual education and training' (Finger, Asun and Volpe, 1995). And they must engage with a wide variety of social movements and ultimately be committed to a democratic social purpose embracing equality and social justice.

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Diversity and the quality debate

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This paper seeks to disentangle the complexities underlying debates about quality and suggests that the issue of quality is bound up with how purpose is perceived and who defines it. Clarifying the plurality of concepts of quality can help education practitioners to address issues of quality, equality, standards and diversity in a more coherent way. Concerns about quality often focus on systems and procedures. This paper seeks to reconnect the quality debate with values, vision and some radical traditions in the education of adults. It examines how the different perspectives on quality impinge upon the opportunities and experiences of adult learners in the contemporary higher education context in England. The different meanings attached to quality have been distinguished by a number of writers (Pfeffer and Coote 1991, Harvey 1993). In perceptions of quality in higher and continuing education there are a number of stakeholders and the paper explores how different stakeholders are more or less privileged within different approaches to quality.

The first concept of quality which has been influential in the higher education system, is the traditional elitist 'Rolls-Royce', no expense spared, concept of quality. According to this conceptualisation, quality criteria do not need to be specified. The internalised and tacit values of academic staff are assumed to ensure high standards. Autonomous institutions accept collective responsibility for standards which remain uncodified. The external examiner system in the old universities first developed in accordance with this conceptualisation of quality and it remains influential in the German higher education system. The key stakeholders are scholars who are, first and foremost, researchers. Quality teaching is a by-product of research, rather than professionalised in its own right.

Within this context, university continuing education offered a parallel, distinctive opportunity for groups excluded from mainstream higher education. In a sense, the identity and raison d'être of traditional extramural departments derived from the social inequality and cultural narrowness of mainstream higher education. Extramural departments allowed space for other classes and cultures to be represented to the extent that practitioners were able and willing to distance themselves from the elite and exclusive higher education system of which they were a product. For those who sought engagement in social and community emancipation, adult education offered the opportunity to construct alternative institutions and discourses.

A second concept, that of centres of excellence, is one that was increasingly influential in the competitive and expanding system of British higher education in the 1980s and 1990s, sustained especially within the culture of the old university sector. High absolute standards are deemed to be definable and measurable as levels of student achievement, both at the point of admission and the exit point. The typical student in this context tends to be young (immediately or within a few years out of school) and academically facile (Scott 1996). This approach to quality is implicit in external graded quality control systems like Teaching Quality Assessment (as it first developed in England following the Further and Higher Education Act 1992), and in systems operating in higher education in the USA. As quality criteria become increasingly explicit, and especially where there is the possibility of quality assessments being linked to funding, the key stakeholders are external academic quality experts and assessors and there is external pressure for professional standards of teaching in higher education to be codified and disseminated.

Within this quality context, university continuing education provides an entry route into higher education for non-traditional students through Access programmes, rather than the parallel distinctive university experience of extramural classes. Within the mainstream, centres of excellence remain relatively inaccessible and exclusive as A-level grades or their equivalent provide a gate-keeping mechanism. This concept of quality reinforces patterns of social inequality in schools, by focusing on the measurement of individual achievement through traditional academic examination. High absolute standards are premised on a high level of competition for places in the elite institutions. There is a hierarchical differentiation within higher education reflected, for example, in the lower representation of students from minority ethnic communities in the old than the new universities (8% and 16% respectively in 1991) (Robinson 1993).

A third concept of quality is concerned with establishing a consensus of universal minimum standards which constitute degree level study, attainable across institutions, subjects and time. In other words, higher education institutions attempt collaboratively to define the boundaries or limits of diversity. Current interest in 'graduateness' is an example of this perspective which was implicit in the work of the CNAA in defining the principles underlying the validation of undergraduate degrees in the polytechnic sector (CNNA 1991). This approach requires collaboration to agree and monitor standards of achievement, through peer review or external

examiners. Professional teachers and academic managers are the key stakeholders and the underlying philosophy is one of collaboration and inclusion rather than of competition and hierarchical differentiation.

This approach is consistent with the mainstreaming and accreditation of university continuing education and the participation of continuing education practitioners in setting and monitoring teaching and learning standards. For example level descriptors are developed to identify different standards of achievement within a framework of broad principles. The more flexible and open the mainstream curriculum becomes, the more pressing is the need to define levels of achievement. Those involved in independent study or experiential learning programmes are likely to be at the forefront in specifying criteria for different levels of awards. Within institutions there has been progress in developing a consensus on definitions of levels, but the notion of national comparability of standards is much harder to establish. External examiners find the question of comparability of standards between institutions the most difficult to address (Watson 1996).

The fourth quality concept, that of fitness for purpose, can be applied alongside the above concept of a minimum common standard. Institutions are differentiated by purpose, mission or market niche. The focus is on ensuring clarity of purpose, appropriateness of product and adequacy of process. Professional teachers define and assess standards and levels of achievement, whilst an external quality assurance system sets organisational standards and checks that systems are in place to ensure these standards are met. There is external audit rather than external assessment. Academic Audit and ISO9000 (BS5750) provide examples of this approach (Freeman 1993 and HEQC 1994) which is also influential in higher education in the Netherlands. Diversity between institutions, within the limits defined by the teaching profession, may be encouraged by this approach. However diversity within institutions may be perceived to be discouraged by the development of standardised quality assurance systems. Teachers and learners may perceive their autonomy and control of the learning process to be undermined, as the curriculum becomes increasingly codified and documented.

A fifth perspective is excellence as quality culture. This may be consistent with other approaches in certain respects but it places more emphasis on fluidity and responsiveness rather than procedures and documentation. In a rapidly changing competitive environment, the focus is on the responsiveness of curriculum development and delivery to customer demand. Public sector purchaser-provider arrangements may be established to emulate private market forces. Organisations are geared to the prevention of defects rather than inspection of the final product and all staff are engaged in sharing responsibility for quality. Hence managers are the key stakeholders. It is recognised that learning goes on outside the academy and that partnerships in the design and operation of programmes need to be established. Knowledge grounded in application gains parity with theoretical knowledge. The university becomes more accountable to wider constituencies. The customer, whether individual or sponsoring employer, is given choice in determining the curriculum.

Replacing professionally driven with customer driven standards, however, risks establishing new forms of educational exclusion, whether 'customers' are individuals or employers. Not only are the financial barriers experienced by individuals on low incomes formidable in relation to both full-time and part-time education and training. There are also powerful cultural barriers. Amongst individuals, the demand for continuing education correlates positively with the level of prior formal education. Educational success generates a capacity and an appetite for learning more than the experience of failure and exclusion. Amongst employers, with some notable exceptions, the Anglo-American business culture militates strongly against investment in the education and training of the least skilled members of the workforce, who continue to be perceived as disposable labour. As individual and employer choice become significant determinants of the pattern of educational provision, new forms of differentiated access to educational opportunities and social exclusion emerge.

Excellence as quality culture, deriving as it does from the business philosophy of total quality mangement, is also often linked with a sixth concept of quality as value for money. The notion of value for money has a number of dimensions. First it makes accountability to funders and customers a key issue. Secondly it draws attention to the economic value of education in terms of its vocational relevance. Unfortunately, value for money has often been interpreted as cost reduction rather than cost effectiveness, defined in accounting terms (short-term cost-saving) rather than strategic terms (long term reskilling of Britain). Funding and student numbers are based on competition in terms of cost. For example, continuing education is perceived as offering a cost-effective form of higher education expansion. Understood in this sense, value for money is likely to be linked with economies of scale and standardisation of teaching and administrative systems, to enable smaller numbers of staff to deal with larger numbers of students. This may be an inevitable concomitant of a mass higher education system. However the concept of

value-added needs to reconnect with the tradition of continuing vocational education which, in the old university sector, valued knowledge grounded in application within a university system traditionally hostile to vocationalism (except in the case of the most elite professions such as medicine and law).

Another way of conceptualising value for money is to analyse the quality of education in terms of value-added. Here the focus is on individual enhancement and progression rather than levels of achievement. Value-added is measured as the difference between student achievement at entry and at exit. Where this concept is adopted, there is an impetus for education to focus on enhancing learning for under-achieving groups in society and to prioritise the development of systems to support individual learning and progression. Defined levels of achievement are necessary but it is not so much the absolute standards achieved on their own that are valued, but rather the extent to which education facilitates progression from lower to higher levels. Professional teachers are the central players in defining standards but performance is monitored administratively.

The final concept of quality is the empowerment of individual learners or groups of learners, especially those whose lives have been neglected within the traditional canons of academic thought. This concept has been very influential in the world of adult education where marginal lives have more strongly been represented than in mainstream higher education. Education empowers these individuals and groups if it succeeds in making them responsible for their own learning and develops their capability for critical thought and effective action (Bagnall 1991).

Empowerment goes beyond the notion of individual customer choice discussed under quality culture above. Being a customer gives you some limited power - to choose between the options available and to withdraw your custom if you are dissatisfied with the product. But it is not the same as intellectual empowerment and it may give you little influence over subjects, objects and methods of enquiry within the curriculum. Flexibility and student choice within the curriculum do not necessarily empower the individual learner if the resulting curriculum is insufficiently challenging to develop critical thinking.

Within the empowerment concept of quality, students themselves become key stakeholders. Not only do they share responsibility for monitoring standards of provision and for designing their own curriculum, as within the quality culture approach. A more thorough-going reconstruction of the curriculum is needed in order that the diverse life experiences of different groups of students are valued, not negated. Mature and non-traditional students who are enriched by those life experiences, contribute to raising the standards of teaching and learning and to reconnecting the classroom with everyday concerns. Empowerment allows for the possibility of engagement as well as detachment. Connections with social movements and knowledge developed within social movements are validated. Social equality and cultural diversity become central issues within the curriculum as well as in terms of access to the curriculum (Gardiner and Taylor 1992). Higher education responds to the challenge of becoming one of many sites for the development of what Peter Scott refers to as open intellectual systems (Scott 1996).

Continuing education has a long history of providing an intellectual space for marginal lives to be reflected and radical ideas to be engaged with, offering a forum for social movements to articulate histories and explore futures. Its place in the past at the margins of the institutions of higher education enabled it to play a significant role at the radical edge of university teaching. Now the challenge is to see whether this intellectual and pedagogic radicalism can play a leading and unifying role in the institutional mainstream. For this to be achieved, there needs to be a will to work with what is best in all the different concepts of quality discussed in this paper. With the exception of the 'traditional' concept, I would argue that there are useful and relevant elements in all these concepts. A recognition of the pluralism underlying the concept of quality can help in identifying unifying values and a shared vision in the contemporary higher education context.

The notion of high absolute standards of achievement, although developed in the context of elitism and social exclusion, should not and will not be abandoned in the competitive global market. Rather there needs to be much greater attention to ensuring that intellectual potential rather than class, race or gender determine which individuals attain the highest levels of achievement. Consideration could be given to using value-added as a tool in the promotion and funding of equal access to high achievement. The linked notions of minimum standards and fitness for purpose are powerful tools for achieving a consensual framework for diversity and for supporting the professional development of university teachers in a way that the strengths of both new and old university teaching are shared across the sector. There are powerful insights to be gained from the notion of a quality culture, with its emphasis on shared responsibility for quality and accountability as an explicit aspect of curriculum design and delivery. Value for money can be reappropriated as the relationship between effectiveness and cost and given a more strategic application. Account needs to be taken of where the greatest skills deficits occur in the British

context and the role higher education can play in tackling these in the medium to long term. For example the nature of the barriers to access for women and men in unskilled occupations need to be investigated and addressed, taking us full circle to the issue of education as empowerment of people at the margins.

In many respects, the institutional and socioeconomic context of contemporary higher education, militates against the possibility of approaching quality from the perspective advocated here. As Alexander and Adelman (1982) demonstrated, approaches to evaluation need to dovetail with the accountability relationships and decision-making processes within institutions and it is difficult to reconcile stakeholding with the hierarchical organisations and cultures typical of higher education. However it is also the case that the expansion of higher education, associated institutional changes within it and wider development of information and education industries have created opportunities for new accountability relationships and for a social redistribution of knowledge (Scott 1996).

This exploration of the quality debate suggests the possibility of a stakeholder approach to quality. Stakeholding is sometimes identified with a post-modern moral relativism (Guba and Lincoln 1989). Whilst quality is, in some respects, a relative concept based on distinct and conflicting perceptions of different stakeholders, namely funders, managers, teachers, administrative staff, students and the communities served by education programmes, there is a need for a shifting consensual framework within which different perspectives are articulated, can interact and be negotiated. Quality is plural but also encompasses shared visions and values. There will be disagreement, tension and points of conflict but all parties can have a stake in the system and the values.

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From backwater to mainstream: the paradigm shift in adult continuing education[1]

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When I graduated with a good degree in the early 1960s, I was offered three university appointments: two in 'internal' politics departments and one in an extramural department. I chose the extramural department to the surprise - and in some cases dismay - of my former tutors. I was warned that I would not gain academic recognition unless I entered a 'mainstream' department. In subsequent years, as I refused offers to move to internal departments, I was advised that a social conscience was a good thing to follow for a while, but I should not leave it 'too late' if I wanted to further my academic career.

I repeat this anecdote as an illustration of the atmosphere that existed thirty-five years ago. The department I joined was not headed by a Professor: 'what', demanded his mainstream colleagues, 'would he profess?' He had, in their view, no academic discipline, simply an administrative role to organise 'evening classes'. Of course, we could quote - frequently! - names such as Hoggart, Thompson and Williams, although these three, and many others, moved from extramural departments once their 'big book' was published. Research was not perceived as a part of most extramural provision, even though individual tutors might publish in their own discipline. Extramural departments were pleasant backwaters affording the leisure, particularly in the summer months, to pursue scholarly - or other! - interests.

Metaphors such as backwater, with its negative overtones, or mainstream and its more positive image, have a 'capacity to persuade, seduce, and socialize us to their selected perspectives' (Deshler 1990, 310). Metaphors are linked to our biography, they are the social expression of the intellectual concepts that name our world. These concepts form a model that has a crucial effect on our actions until the conflict with observed reality forces a 'paradigm shift' (Kuhn 1970) to a new model with its own metaphors. This is now happening in adult continuing education (ACE). The shift is from a model based on distinctions to one based on integration. These analytical categories need to be developed before the implications of the shift can be explored.

Distinctions

The provision of adult continuing education in Britain has developed within a system which has more subdivisions than in many other countries. These distinctions affect all aspects of the provision: the definition of provider; those for whom it is provided; for what purpose; and in what manner. Providers of education for adults, as distinct from adult continuing education with capital letters, include universities, further education, local government, TECs, voluntary organisations and private agencies. Both the public and the private sectors are, and always have been, providers of education for adults. These various providers supply learners from every adult age group and from every social and educational background. They include many from overseas. The purposes include individual or social development; academic qualifications; recreational activities - intellectual, physical or artistic; and vocational education and training. The manner in which education is provided for adults varies through informal groupings, full-time or part-time courses, and distance learning packages in various media. Adult continuing education in British terms has been a distinct aspect of the education of adults. Heavily influenced by the Great Tradition developed by academics from the older universities, adult continuing education has been constructed from a particular configuration of the distinctions already mentioned. This configuration has excluded, to a major extent, FE, vocational education or training, qualification courses, distance learning, and private provision. Adult continuing education has also excluded, by its prevailing hegemony, overseas students and others whose family origins are from non-European cultures. The Great Tradition has been reflected in the past in the proceedings of SCUTREA although in the last few years, as recognised by the proceedings of this conference, we have become more self-conscious about our constraining traditions and metaphors.

Integration

The narrow definition of adult continuing education led to marginalisation - relegation to a backwater; adult continuing education was important to those involved, but often seen as irrelevant to both government policies and many prospective students. In the past few years the traditional model has been challenged by both the government and technical change. Government policy has emphasised the economic significance of the education of adults through improved qualifications and vocational training. Fang (1996) argues that this emphasis in government policy is moving decisions about the

[1] I am grateful to Peter Emsley, Fang Xiao, Conchita Felix-Corral, Kevin Longmore, Danny Mashengele and Carmen Morales-Guarda, research students under my supervision, for permission to draw on their research and for discussing the ideas in this paper with me. I am also grateful for the continuous intellectual stimulation afforded by Hazel Hampton. As usual, she has acted as a critical friend during the writing of this paper.

education of adults away from the academic sphere towards market considerations. These considerations affect both supply and demand. From the supply side, government funding is no longer available to support the type of adult education that adult educators might wish to provide; the provision must follow government requirements to improve the level of qualifications within the country as a strategic objective of economic policy. Even the apparent exceptions to this generalisation can be interpreted as bringing people into the educational system as a way of making them more employable. From the demand side, the establishment of output measures rather than inputs as a basis for funding has moved the public providers of the education of adults into the market in competition both with each other and with the private sector. Funding follows the students; their preferences, within the structure decided by government policy, have become even more important than in the past.

The ending of Responsible Body status and the establishment of the Higher Education Funding Council and Further Education Funding Council has moved adult continuing education funding into the mainstream. Of course, much of the funding of the education of adults was in the mainstream already. The funding for the Open University, for example, was never perceived as a part of adult continuing education. Indeed, some 'Adult Education Directors in the late 1960s feared the Open University, thinking they would lose students' (Cameron 1996). The success of the Open University and the rapidly developing polytechnics led to a redefinition of the typical undergraduate: 'In September 1990, for the first time, the majority of entrants to higher education were "mature" ' (McNair 1994, 264). Moreover, even in the 'old' university sector a survey showed continuing professional education 'to be a significant university activity' (Tovey 1992, 127). The universities concerned stressed the benefit for society as a whole of improved professional practice and the benefit to the universities both of links with industry and in income generation (*ibid*, 129).

A further unacknowledged source of adult students followed the government policy of increasing the fees for overseas students. This, together with a general reduction in the per capita unit of resource available to educational institutions has, as one of its consequences, led both higher education and further education to join the market for overseas students. These students, for example, now account for 35% of the research students in my own university. They are usually much older than home-based students, frequently they are married with young children (Felix-Corral 1996). They have more in common with students on continuing professional development courses than with traditional university students.

The traditional model of adult continuing education is being challenged not only by government policies, but also by technical changes linked to the development of computers. At first these were used as a surrogate for telephones and text-based distance learning material. This led to criticisms from tutors who stressed the importance of interactive adult learning and the significance of the 'self-educative process' (Dominice 1990, 210). More recently, telematics have countered these criticisms by the development of computer supported co-operative learning (CSCL). CSCL makes 'it possible to retain many of those values [of adult learning] while offering a flexible, humane and effective form of distance learning' (McConnell 1995, 124). The distinction between attendance and distance learning or, indeed, between home and overseas students is becoming attenuated.

Many of the points made in the previous few paragraphs are finding expression in the development of the Dearne Valley College which can stand as an exemplar of the integrative model. Based on Rockingham Further Education College, the Dearne Valley College will offer everything from basic skills to postgraduate qualifications. It will cooperate with other further education colleges, the Workers' Educational Association, and the University of Sheffield. The curriculum will be heavily influenced by the need for economic development in the area and funds have been attracted from the Dearne Valley Partnership City Challenge and the European Regional Development Fund as well as from educational sources. The College will incorporate computer assisted learning at the heart of its pedagogy and will exploit computer links with the University of Sheffield for some of its teaching.

Discussion

The reaction by professionals to the changes discussed above has been either a regret for the past or the espousal of a new realism. The regret for the past takes two forms. There are those who continue to argue for the values of liberal adult education, echoing the great inaugural lecture of R S Peters:

> Education, then, can have no ends beyond itself. Its value derives from principles and standards implicit in it. To be educated is not to have arrived at a destination: it is to travel with a different view (Peters 1963, 47)

Others, including Jane Thompson, regret what they perceive as the loss of a warm comradeship in pursuit of socio-political objectives. She writes 'an open letter to whoever's left' (perhaps a deliberately

ambiguous word); while Keith Jackson perceives a 'crippling loss of resources' (Yeo 1996, 107). Such a phrase does not take account of the great increase in the number of adults studying outside the ACE tradition.

The new realists often start with a critique of the Great Tradition represented by liberal adult education. Duke argues

> . . . that the scholar-serf, grammar-technical dichotomies of the Greeks and the Victorians lived on into the liberal tradition. If we need liberal (adult) education today then we need also to confront this class shadow; and along with it the neutering effect of the passionless, essentially cerebral, inevitably exclusivist, meaning and connotations that liberal adult education still carries (Duke 1990, 242)

Cameron maintains that the tradition of tutorial classes 'died because students did not want it' while a later emphasis on short courses in high culture failed to meet its aims (Cameron 1996). The students were overwhelmingly drawn from a restricted, already educated, sector of society. The syllabus continued along well-worn paths that seldom strayed outside the male, European hegemony. While many older white women students accepted this syllabus, younger people and people from minority ethnic groups were under-represented in the classes. Women's Studies and the emerging claims for a syllabus that takes account of Africentricity (Mashengele 1996) are now enlarging our understanding of the world in ways that liberal adult education failed to accommodate.

The new realists point, also, to the growing resources attracted to ACE in the 1990s and to the great growth in both academic and vocational post-18 education (McNair 1994; Duke and Taylor 1994). They stress the need for new partnerships with vocational concerns (Duke 1991). From the vocational side a welcoming hand is outstretched on behalf of the TECs: 'we are committed to adult learning because it is the essential component of the modern economy we seek to create' (Howell 1995, 201). The integrative model begins to harden into a new paradigm.

Conclusions

At this point we need to return to our metaphor analysis. We need to question the metaphors that are being used. We need to ask whose content is being placed within the emerging pattern of images: 'When we accept without critical reflection others' definitions of the world, we have not exerted our own power' (Deshler 1990, 311). The new paradigm uses concepts such as student (customer) choice, added value, quality provision, measured outcomes and accountability; and who, as Emsley asks rhetorically, could be against such things? He goes on to argue that although the language frequently appears congruous with ACE traditions, the discourse leads to an evaluation of ACE that ignores its longer-term moral purpose and replaces this purpose with a short-term market justification; the practitioner, in the terminology of Habermas, becomes technician (Emsley 1996).

What then is this moral purpose? Carmen Morales-Guarda, in a seminar on the abstract of this paper, suggested that

> education is important not only for the market but for social and political consensus; for social coherence. Neo-liberalism often uses the language of the left - for example, choice and democracy; what is missing is education for reflection: teaching people to think.

Such an education was at the heart of the Great Tradition (McIlroy 1991, 16); it does not necessarily fall into the trap of proselytising for a particular view on social issues (for an example of this trap see Mezirow 1990, 375); but it 'is about providing the intellectual and educational context in which students can work their own way to their own conclusions' (Taylor 1990, 244). We should continue to argue for this core value of adult continuing education in the present context of mass adult higher education and the new vocationalism. This is why, in Duke's phrase, we should see ourselves as 'change-agents' in universities despite Cameron's reservations (Cameron 1996); it is the reason why some of us stayed in adult continuing education and declined invitations to join mainstream departments. We now enter the mainstream at a time when 'a large part of the immediate future agenda of higher education relates closely to continuing education objectives' (Duke and Taylor 1994, 94); that agenda also relates closely to students who are mature enough to welcome adult continuing education approaches to education. We have something to offer to overseas students, to the broadening of the curriculum, and to a critique of existing academic and vocational education. We will not make that contribution if we continue to regret the past, nor if we accept the new metaphors from the market as a firm paradigm for future developments.

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Function, fascination and facilitation of reflective practice in continuing professional education[1]

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Learning from Lerner

It is probably not good form to start with a pun as a sub-heading but I am unable to resist it! In thinking about this paper, I have found it slightly embarrassing to be able to locate the philosophy for much of my recent practice in the words of the lyricist Alan Jay Lerner rather than in any more learned texts. However, I am going to stay with the connection for two reasons.

First, it almost goes without saying that good adult learning derives from a synthesis of 'everyday' experience with academic theory. Second, the focus of this paper will be on the inclusion of reflective practice (RP) as an assessed element of Masters programmes, and an issue that I shall come to later concerns the value placed on different kinds of knowledge in an academic setting.

When I was considering the conference theme about futures in the education of adults rather than the possibility of a future, two images came to mind. One was of a photograph that recently appeared on the front page of several British newspapers showing a futures dealer being led away after having been instrumental in the collapse of his institution; the other was a line from the Lerner and Loewe musical *Paint Your Wagon*: 'I've never seen a sight that didn't look better looking back'.

In the context of the education of adults, the first image seemed to hint at certain dangers inherent in banking on futures; the latter to be a reminder that, even as we contemplate the implications of possible new futures, adult education's past(s) will be re-viewed and undoubtedly re-interpreted.

Looking back

Indeed, this review has already begun. Finger (1995, 110-111), for instance, maintains that, despite the development of three major schools of thought in adult education since its theory-building peak in the 1960s, the dominant paradigm remains that of the Western Enlightenment tradition. In Finger's terms this has the future dependent upon the promotion of individual learning and growth which will produce 'an enlightened citizenry capable of meeting the challenges of industrialized societies' (*ibid.*).

Finger (*op.cit.*, 115) goes on to argue that certain concepts, in which much RP is founded, like self-directed learning (Candy 1991) and individual critical thinking (Brookfield 1987), adopted in just this context, have now not only lost their impetus for such social change but 'actively contribute to the reactive and defensive modes that prevail in post-modern societies'; these practices have simply turned into 'an additional survival skill or a supplementary tool to compete successfully on the market'.

Despite acknowledgement of RP's 'enlightened' pedigree (including, for example, the work of Dewey 1909/1933), and of its potential therapeutic effects, other critics have recorded similar anxieties about the function of RP in current educational practice. Zeichner (1994) even goes so far as to suggest that, because such a wide range of beliefs have now been incorporated into the discourse about RP, it has become little more than a bandwagon and the concept rendered virtually meaningless.

Johnston (1995, 74-75) asks whether it is fast becoming 'the new orthodoxy, an institutional imperative', particularly in universities where it represents a methodology, given impetus by the implementation of teaching quality assessment procedures, to 'effectively combine research and teaching' and, as a bonus, to 'encourage students to take on more responsibility for their own autonomous learning, thus reducing the accountability of the teacher'. Clift *et al.* (1990, vii) preface their text with the question: 'Is reflective practice just the latest educators' fad or is it a potential cornerstone of efforts to unify the vast array of educational reform initiatives that will lead us into the 21st century?'. I incline towards the latter view

What's going on here?

Nevertheless, in this context of doubt, several colleagues and I have become increasingly concerned about what we have actually unleashed by introducing a module on RP into several Masters degree programmes. My own concern was tempered with some amusement as I began to write this paper. Having borrowed a recording of *Paint Your Wagon* to locate the 'looking back' lyric, I found our collective anxieties given voice in the words of another song. Significantly, it posed exactly the questions that we suggest students use to initiate their own RP process.

Lamenting that, of all the places she has been 'this one is the most bewildering', Lerner's female lead character sings:

[1] My thanks are due all the colleagues and students who have worked on the *Becoming a Reflective Practitioner* module at the University of Sheffield, and especially to Alison McKay who conducted the evaluation and currently co-ordinates the module for the MEd in Continuing Education. Without their ideas and generous efforts this paper would not have been possible.

What's going on? What's in the air?

What's going on here? What's going on?

What bewilders her is her own situation in a town full of prospectors hoping to find gold. The current situation of many adult educators where no-one - neither students, institutions nor funding agencies - seems to be entirely clear what they are hoping to find, or even where to look, is probably even more bewildering.

With so much 'in the air', my decision in 1993 to introduce a new module entitled *Becoming a Reflective Practitioner* into an MEd programme in Continuing Education, on which all the students are experienced, mid-career, educators of adults, was perhaps ill-timed. However, it was taken in the context of re-modelling the programme into a two-year, modular, credit-rated format rather than in the light of external circumstances.

The stated intention of the module was (and remains) to encourage students to reflect on their own professional practice and its links with the 'theory' contained in academic literature. This intention had always been implicit in the programme as a whole but not directly 'rewarded' within the existing assessment procedures. Using a 'critical incident' format adapted from Flanagan (1954) and Benner (1984), a four-step procedure was devised to enable students to select and record elements of 'practitioner incidents' for subsequent reflection; step three was 'to illuminate the incident through appropriate literature'.

The module itself was to run for the whole of the taught part of the course (normally fifteen months) alongside other modules which were provided on a termly basis. Students would be expected to select and write up one incident per term (four in all). For assessment purposes they would be required to present a polished version of one of these incidents (i.e. in a form suitable for 'public' readership, with names and thoughts considered to be too personal removed), plus an overview of the learning points derived from all four incidents.

At a previous SCUTREA conference, I described some of the early stages of the development of this module, including difficulties which colleagues and I had encountered in establishing a RP tutor group in order to parallel and cross-fertilise the work of our students (Hunt et.al. 1994). We have now completed and evaluated the pilot run of the RP module. Produced in distance learning format, it is currently running in four different Masters degree programmes encompassing continuing, nursing and medical education.

As tutors we continue constantly to ask of ourselves, as well as of our students: 'What's going on here?'. In the rest of this paper I shall comment on a few answers, and more questions, which we have generated over the past two years.

Where are we going?

One of the first issues we had to consider was the extent of our responsibility to support the students whom we were encouraging to 'do' RP. We had covered the mechanics of this by developing a personal tutor group system, providing opportunity for discussion, and setting out what we had thought were clear written guide-lines for getting started and for the final assessment. What we had not thought about carefully enough was how enthusiastic some students might become about this work and where it might then lead them.

We have since suggested, in a new introduction, that the module should carry a health warning: CAUTION! RP DOES NOT PROCEED IN AN ORDERLY FASHION! The reality of it is infinitely more chaotic than the neat four-step procedure with which we had originally been so pleased. Unbounded, it can lead down any number of different routes. The two that concerned us most led to two extremes which we dubbed 'therapy' and 'institutional challenge'.

Along the former route, a student might start to unravel threads associated with patterns of behaviour running back to earlier traumatic incidents. As academic tutors, not all with a background in counselling, how should we respond? Having set up a course requirement for the student to engage with RP, we clearly had a responsibility to facilitate the process - but if this took us beyond the boundary of our own competence, what then?

Going in almost the opposite direction, a student might focus on organisational difficulties and decide to confront management policy or even to leave her/his organisation. Where did that leave us? We could not actively stand beside the student in an organisation of which we had no part, and often little knowledge. Neither could we do much to assist with the repercussions of any action the student might take. (My image of institutional collapse/individual ruin contingent upon people being enabled to envisage new futures was not entirely fanciful in this context!)

In any event, what right did we have to try to persuade students to stop their own reflective process; or to persuade them to take it down a different route?

Such dilemmas were compounded when, at the end of fifteen months, having occasionally been party to some difficult issues which students had worked through in the context of the module, we had to change our roles from that of personal tutors to assessors. Instead of being a 'critical friend' we were now charged with upholding academic standards in awarding ten credits for a piece of written work

submitted as part requirement for a Masters degree, albeit on a 'pass or not yet complete' basis.

How should we assess the relative merits of, say, a final submission which was well-written and well-referenced - but which contained only superficial personal reflection, perhaps because the student felt uncomfortable with this latter style of writing, against one where we knew a student had undergone a great struggle in order to articulate and reflect on deeply personal issues affecting her/his professional judgement - but where cross-referencing to 'theory' was minimal or non-existent?

Painting our wagon

The extent to which students' RP work should be required to relate to 'theory', and the ways in which experiential knowledge can be acknowledged and valued within an academic setting, are issues which dogged us from the start (see Hunt *et al.* 1993, 55). We have partially resolved them, and attempted to deal with some of the other questions I have just highlighted, by writing a new introductory unit to the RP module. Drawing on students' evaluation of the pilot run, as well as on the records of tutors' meetings, it is intended to help us to 'show our colours' much more clearly.

We have had to recognise, for example, that, as tutors on an academic programme, although we must have concern for the affective and behavioural domains, our focus must be to support students' development primarily in the cognitive domain. In other words, as the unit now spells out, it is not our job to offer therapy, neither are we in an appropriate position to provide consultancy to improve students' individual practice or that of their organizations. We do, however, have aspirations for students' intellectual empowerment.

By that, again as detailed in the unit, we mean that we want students to be able to 'name' their learning and from which domain it has primarily emerged; to identify 'authoritative voices' from their past, their current professional practice and 'the literature', and to deal with these appropriately; to recognise the power of their own voices and to have the confidence to embark on a written discourse with themselves and others on professional issues which need careful scrutiny.

We have come to believe that our own voices, as well as those of our students, gain in authority as we name the things we accept or reject, and articulate our reasons, rather than leaving these as vaguely-felt 'taken-for-granteds' in our professional practice. Our model of the RP module is now quite specifically of a bridge between Schon's (1983) 'swampy lowlands' of practice and the 'high ground' of academic theory. It provides a temporary refuge where experiences gained in both places can be brought, isolated, examined in supportive company, and so made less bewildering.

To some extent, this is, as Finger (*op.cit.*) argues, 'a survival skill', a way of reconciling at a personal level some of the many apparent inconsistencies between ideologies, legislative and managerial requirements, and private beliefs. The ability to identify and articulate 'what is going on here' in professional and organisational terms may well represent, as some of our students have already discovered to their own benefit, 'a supplementary tool' to give people an edge 'on the market'. However, far from resulting in a post-modernist nightmare of fragmentation and competition, we have found that when RP is undertaken as a conscious and structured process it often results in a clarification of connections and responsibilities, to oneself as well as to others.

Our developing model of RP, as facilitated through an assessed academic programme, thus undoubtedly remains within the Enlightenment tradition. It is concerned with intellectual growth; it requires practitioners to stand outside, examine critically, make sense of, and so develop the wagonload of experience and knowledge they travel with. It goes beyond this by also requiring them to become consciously aware of the presence of fellow travellers; the nature of their respective 'wagons'; the terrain over which they all presently travel; what maps are available; the implications for each other of their respective journeys, and of individually or collectively changing direction.

Tutors who undertake to facilitate this work need to develop similar awareness. Johnston's (*op.cit.*) suggestion that the introduction of RP into academic programmes might be a means of 'reducing the accountability of the teacher' could not be further from the truth. Our travels as RP tutors on the MEd have brought us to a point where we are having to question the nature of the programme itself. Instead of the programme containing a module on RP, RP may yet come to contain the programme.

We may have inadvertently become part of a bandwagon - but the very nature of it has forced us to examine our own experience and knowledge and how this colours our practice as academic tutors. The road ahead of us is not yet clear, but perhaps there is something to be learned from the optimism of Lerner's theme song; it might almost have been written as a theme for RP:

> Where am I going? I don't know.
> Where am I heading? I ain't certain ...
> All I know is I am on my way ...
> Got a dream ... Got a song.
> Paint Your Wagon, and come along! (Lerner and Loewe 1951)

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Community education: the new generation

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Community education is an elusive term, one that means many things to many people. Those of us who define ourselves as community educators come from many directions. The term community education is used to describe the work of individuals within differently funded and constituted organisations, with differing missions and rationales. It may encompass sections of further education, local authority adult education provision, youth and community work, charitable enterprises and sections of university adult education. Changes in policy and funding over the last decade have affected some of these distinctions quite dramatically. Some long standing barriers have disintegrated, but new ones have arisen in unfamiliar places.

This blurring of boundaries resulted in changes in the nature of the client groups attracted to courses at our institution. Education provision within this university has traditionally been directed primarily towards training for teaching within further education. Increasingly, however, those enrolling on our courses were engaged in a range of informal educational activities - youth work, advice work, victim support - or more formal activities in informal or community based settings - teaching sewing and ESOL in community schools, painting and decorating on housing estates, developing job-seeking skills in community centres. We also received enquiries from individuals who wanted to work in adult and community education, but lacked a subject specialism. They were looking for a qualification, directed towards the tertiary sector, which encompassed subject specialism and teaching skills. We began to think about developing a specific degree, incorporating professional qualifications for prospective community educators and decided on the basis of our market research to offer as initial specialisms either youth and community work or literacy teaching. In developing a structure and curriculum for these groups we were obliged to consider the state of flux described above, to think carefully about who our students would be, where they would appropriately undertake work-based learning and what skills and understandings they would require to succeed in these contexts.

The kinds of wider changes shaping our decisions about the form of the degree have included the cessation of Section 11 funding and the consequent loss or mainstreaming of many community based activities (Keel 1994), the Further and Higher Education Act, the incorporation of further education colleges, the growth of accreditation and, certainly in our region, the absorption by further education colleges of what had been Local Authority adult education. (Jones 1994). Thus community education that traced its funding and management through to a further education college appeared to be growing; youth and community work was still largely controlled by local authorities, but adult education had separated from it. New alliances were formed, old ones broken, and a process of cultural readjustment or resistance begun as workers found themselves operating alongside, or managed by, groups and individuals with different histories and, possibly, aims, values and experiences.

Whilst the legislative framework for some aspects of community education has changed dramatically, the effects on youth and community work have been indirect, rather than direct. It still lacks any clear legislative framework despite the many attempts to achieve this. The elusive terminology of the Education Reform Act, referring to adequate provision for leisure, recreation and social activities for young people, has proved to be meaningless and unenforceable. The legislative position of youth and community work is therefore exactly as it was under the 1944 Act, where it was consigned to a section headed 'Miscellaneous Provisions' after the clauses dealing with school meals and milk (Salter Davies 1970)

Youth and community services have remained a local authority responsibility. They have been hit by the turbulence of the changes in local government (for example, local management of schools, compulsory competitive tendering and mergers of departments), reductions in expenditure which often hit non-statutory services hardest and the rise of a public sector managerialism which has demanded that youth and community work explain itself in the language of accountancy.

A struggle involving the policy, practice and funding of the service, which debates its primary purpose and its philosophical base, is emerging. The profession of youth and community work is relatively new. In 1960, the Albemarle report was published and established youth work as part of the welfare state, alongside teaching and the then emerging professions of social work and community work. It drew on the most innovative practice in social and group work which had at its centre a dynamic tension between the provision of opportunities for informal social education and social welfare interventions targeted at those young people most in need (Smith 1996).

The narrowing focus, reduction in budgets, and the need to demonstrate increased service delivery to specific groups of young people has resulted in an increased recognition that youth and community

workers can undertake work with groups that other services are unable to touch. Education and Social Services departments are increasingly pushing to shape youth and community work priorities, and to determine its client groups. This risks leaving some practitioners and services unclear about the direction of the work and their primary role, jeopardising their ability to use informal education to work with those young people whom they perceive to be most in need. Such staff might well view the changes as a threat, whereas others welcome them as an opportunity to come in from the margins. This confusion has been accentuated by reduction in core funding, purchaser provider splits, contract cultures and the government's continued resistance to providing a statutory framework for the service. On the benefits side, it has increased the profile of the service, opened doors to forming new partnerships and alliances and, for some, to defining the core functions in a sharper and more robust manner.

Whatever the rights and wrongs of this debate, if youth and community work is to survive and prosper, it must do so in the world as it is today, and as it will be tomorrow. The key question is whether we have practitioners with the knowledge, values and skills to work effectively in this changing environment. Doubts about the answer to this question create insecurity and lack of confidence. The development of a new degree in community education was inevitably shaped at least partially by this question. Three other questions affected more profoundly the rationale and philosophical perspectives which underpinned the development: whether it was possible to break through claims for a unique and separate identity for the professions that make up community education; whether there was a set of generic skills and a body of knowledge that could cut across these professional disciplines and whether people from diverse backgrounds, starting points and intentions could be brought together so that similarities and differences were harnessed to the benefit of the learning groups and those who use the service.

Course design was influenced by these changes and differences. We argued that in such a shifting environment, intending community educators needed to be aware of a spectrum of approaches to community education, to develop the critical faculty needed to recognise the value systems underpinning the work they observed and to begin to position themselves, consciously, within these systems. In one sense then, this 'neutral' approach has shaped the development. The curriculum incorporates modules at all levels which are designed to offer these kinds of critical perspectives on models and theories of community education, although this relativistic approach is somewhat undermined by the fact that the degree implicitly privileges three distinct approaches in the way in which it is organised and taught:

Assessment of practice based modules follows in the tradition of a great deal of professional education through the use of reflective journals and assignments demanding the kinds of critically reflective work advocated by writers such as Schon (1987) and Brookfield (1986, 1987) and is concerned with the development of 'theories in use.' The students' own learning, however, is defined through learning outcomes and learning contracts. In this respect it promotes individualised approaches to adult learning characteristic of national vocational qualifications. In complete contrast with the potential for isolation and political neutrality within the learning contract approach, however, the decision to train youth and community workers and literacy teachers together was premised on a Freirian, rather than a utilitarian, view of literacy work. We perceived literacy work as a part of the process of empowerment of a group or community, not only as a practical and functional activity. We perceived youth and community work as essentially educative and developmental, rather than palliative, accommodating or caring. It seemed perfectly logical to assume therefore that such workers would need the same kinds of understandings of educational theory, the social sciences and cultural studies as well as similar kinds of inter- and intra-personal skills. We noted that in many cases community workers and literacy workers operated side by side, that they often worked with very similar client groups and that they shared sources of funding. The logic behind bringing these groups together seemed compelling.

What is emerging in practice, as a result of the different cultures which seem to define literacy work and youth work in this country, is that, by and large, the literacy tutors have been exposed to more functional, individualistic, deficiency-based models of education, located within a positivistic view of knowledge, whereas the youth workers are placed with groups who perceive themselves as holding radical, anti-hegemonic agendas. Definitions of the word 'empowerment' within the literacy context tended to mean empowerment to participate within existing structures and systems and to have a more collective and radical definition for students placed in other contexts. The distinctions were not of course absolute and do not apply to every literacy student and every youth work student. However, three brief examples serve to illustrate the situation.

The youth and community students work with 'women and girls.' They see these people as a politically identifiable group; they think in terms of feminist agendas and oppression. The literacy teachers come back from placement talking about teaching

'ladies'. We have, of course, discussed this language and its implications. The literacy teachers are mostly well aware, as their writing and discussions show, of feminist politics, lived and theoretical. Within the contexts in which they teach, however, 'lady' is a term that offers dignity and respect to the woman student. It may not be indicative of solidarity with the rest of her sex, but the emphasis is on personal development, not sexual revolution.

This individual and personal emphasis causes a real hiatus between theory and practice and leads to the second illustration. Much of the classic work on literacy is built around the concept of literacy development as a group activity. Students benefit from the opportunity to share their writing with others, to make the communication process real, to combine written work with oracy, to be stimulated by new ideas, to realise that they are not alone. The student literacy teachers enjoyed texts such as *Talking About Literacy* (Mace 1994) and were inspired by some of the practical ideas therein. But many of them were working in settings that were constrained by two factors: the drive towards resource-based learning and the use of accreditation frameworks. This applied particularly, but not always and not exclusively, to literacy work in community education settings controlled by further education colleges. The need to maximise student throughput meant that resource based learning offering roll-on roll-off learning was widely in operation. Thus literacy students might come to any session at any time, might not share the room with the same person or people from week to week, and would not engage in any joint work as they would be at different stages of development. The need to maximise funding by putting each student through some sort of accreditation meant that individuals were usually working in isolation, preparing tasks for their portfolios.

The final cultural difference between our two routes concerns the tendency for the trainee youth workers to find themselves in placements where youth work has more of a caring than an educative function. Thus they are excited by working with people in crisis. The literacy students are generally working in highly pressurised, structured, timetabled contexts. They observe the frenetic pace at which the full-time lecturers operate. They are frustrated, on emerging from these exhausting settings to find that 'they (youth anc community group) look down on us because we're not dealing with pregnant girls all the time...'. Different value systems are emerging within the groups, one concerning work, learning and outcomes, the other concerning care, struggle and autonomy.

The review and development of any initiative must attempt to engage with and understand the experiences of the students and revisit the original intentions behind the venture. This paper attempts to do that and to site the review within a broader analysis of shifting patterns and influences. The three examples provided might suggest a chasm which is impossible to bridge, but our commitment to working with the student groups both together and separately is rooted in the belief that the emerging value systems identified above need not be diametrically opposed. They can and must enrich one another through 'critical dialogue' (Freire, 1992). The two perspectives need each other to survive in the rapidly changing context of community education; the group, in effect, is a microcosm of the realities within which the students will work. Bringing these groups together means that individuals are able to reflect upon and contextualise values and practices which might otherwise seem sacrosanct and inevitable.

The students develop strategic and interpersonal skills by negotiating about their differences. They are learning to forge the kinds of alliances which will be a requirement as community education hits the next millennium. They are able to challenge stereotypes about professional groups and sometimes to perceive that they may have been living up to those stereotypes. They understand that no single agency has the solution to complex social issues, however impressive, persuasive or harassed they may seem. They begin the difficult process of learning to manage difference creatively, valuing the new understanding which can emerge from conflict.

As we review this first year of operation, our thinking about the training of future community educators has been shaped by the dynamic of conflict we have observed, leading us to prescribe some tentative principles, which will underpin future curriculum development for us. The principles are threefold: our students need specific skills for working with specific client groups; they need generic skills and high levels of adaptability to enable them to live creatively with uncertainty; above all they need a theoretical and intellectual framework which can contextualise the experiences they encounter. They need to emerge from their training as adaptable specialists who can recognise, and work effectively in the midst of, shifting and conflicting values, principles and practices.

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European involvement in the future of education of adults in England and Wales: a professional perspective

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The United Kingdom is rapidly becoming part of the European Union and this paper reports research which was conducted as part of a European project into professionals' views about the future of adult education. The project was initiated by the University of Leuven and conducted almost simultaneously in fifteen countries. This paper reports on what educators of adults in England and Wales considered what should be the future involvement of the European Union in their fields.

Europeanisation of adult education

The process of Europeanisation is part of the larger process of globalisation which can be understood as a response to major economic changes. From the time of the Industrial Revolution parts of Europe, mostly those having become Protestant at the Reformation, developed modern economies with a high level of technology. There was a sense of the 'West and the rest' (Hall 1992) and this bloc has become more coherent with subsequent economic changes. It could be argued that the process of Europeanisation is a product of the classical market forces which were enabled to operate from the time when free movement of capital between countries was allowed. Basically, the theory of regional development means that a region's employment structure will be enhanced through the investment of capital in the area and this generates even more wealth throughout the region. Consequently, regions where capital exists get richer in contrast to those regions where there is less capital to invest. For as long, therefore, as there is not a free flow of capital between countries, those with wealth have more capital and generate more employment opportunities, so that the West got richer at the expense of the remainder of the world. This also meant that these countries were able to tax large and successful companies and so generate sufficient wealth to create and sustain a welfare state, which also enabled further growth of adult education on a leisure time basis.

However, as barriers between countries were lowered in respect to the transfer of capital, conditions of the classical market began to emerge on a worldwide scale. Large companies seeking profit were no longer constrained by the restrictive practices of trades unions or high taxation for the welfare state. They were able to seek more profitable places in which to invest their capital. Some less developed countries with cheaper and malleable labour forces became the focus of capital investment, although there were still many countries that were a bad risk, e.g. the Eastern bloc and China. Classical economists would argue that until such time as there is an equilibrium in locations, companies will invest in the most profitable places and so there will be a gradual enrichment of poorer countries at the expense of more wealthy ones. The poorer countries have, consequently, embarked on the process of modernisation, while the more wealthy and less competitive ones faced a period when they could no longer take their wealth or income for granted and appeared to stagnate or, in other words, they entered a new phase of modernity - late modernity. Some first world countries, like Germany, with reformed labour relations and industrial investment, have still been able to compete relatively successfully while other countries with practices embedded in the past have faced a more difficult period. As a result, there has been a gradual change in the taken-for-granted values in West Europe, including the restructuring of the welfare state; values that had emerged in part as a result of the Enlightenment were now being questioned. Naturally, this is an over-simplification of the globalisation process which had been going on long before the free movement of capital through colonial imperialism. Now some transnational companies have introduced an international division of labour, which has also lessened the significance of national economies and the state, re-emphasising the globalisation process. While Marx thought that the state would wither away with the disappearance of capitalism and the emergence of the classless society after the Revolution, the nation state's position has been put in jeopardy by the forces of capitalism itself as governments seek to work more closely together in response to these globalising tendencies of capitalism.

Not all theorists have attempted to explain globalisation in economic terms but Wallerstein's (1990) theory contains six elements: capitalism is worldwide; having always sought wider markets, this has created the contradiction between modernisation and Westernisation; the problem of getting workers to work harder for lower pay is inherently difficult; modernisation as a central universalising theme gives priority to newness and change; the capitalist world-economy does not merely reward unequally, it is the locus of increasing polarity over historical time; the strongest and wealthiest states have risen and declined. Most of his points are apparent in the above argument, although his final point implies that history always repeats itself, which is not logically correct. Nevertheless, it is important to recognise that it is hardly possible to understand the development of continuing education in Europe without reference to

this process. The research, therefore, endeavours to discover what place Europe has in the development of education of adults in England and Wales.

Research methodology

This project was initiated by the University of Leuven where research using the Delphi method had endeavoured to find out what professionals in Belgium thought about the future of adult education in their country. Three rounds of consultation with professionals led to the formation of a questionnaire that contained most of their ideas. This questionnaire, when translated into English, became the basis of the research conducted in fifteen countries in Europe. In each country the procedures used in the research were approximately the same.

The questionnaire had three parts: the first examined the background of the respondents; the second looked at the problems, goals and provision of lifelong education for adults; the final section contained a number of different themes, such as the tasks of different 'authorities' in society, future direction of educational policy, legal measures, forms of co-operation and the European dimension. It is this last part which forms the basis of this paper.

In each country, the professional educators approached came from five different constituencies: vocational education of young adults; vocational education and training of adults; vocational training within industry and commerce; adult basic education; adult general education. From the yearbooks of education, and in consultation with colleagues from the University of Wales, a sampling frame was constructed covering these different areas of education. 427 questionnaires (327 in England and 100 in Wales) were sent out and there were 111 respondents (89 from England and 22 from Wales) - a low response rate of 27 percent and 22 percent respectively. One returned questionnaire was not usable. This low response rate can be accounted for by the nature of the research instrument, and the fact that there was no Steering Committee to assist with the follow up through personal contact. The following section reports an analysis of the relevant parts of the questionnaire.

The respondents and their responses

Few educators work in closely defined spheres and so it was not surprising that the respondents to this questionnaire worked in more than one sphere of education: 84 reported working in adult training; 74 in adult general education; 56 in vocational education; 55 in training in industry; 53 in education in general; 48 in adult basic education. 86 of the respondents either had, or have had, full-time employment; 18 have part-time employment and 15 have worked in voluntary organisations. Their professional positions included heads of department in institutions of higher education; principals in further education; heads of training in industry; directors of local education authorities; chief executives of national commissions. Interestingly, 100 of the respondents regarded themselves as policy makers, 62 as educators, 46 as commentators and 32 as researchers. Of the 110 respondents, 76 were male and 34 female. The age profile of the respondents wasas follows: one under 35; 32 in the 36-45 age group; 54 in the 46-55 age group; 23 in the 55+ age group. The respondents were asked the extent to which they were personally and/or their field involved in a European dimension. There were 79 valid responses, with 60 involved in the exchange of knowledge, 58 developing networks, 36 developing common programmes, 33 having financial involvement with other educational institutions, 30 developing contacts, 24 involved in training with partner institutions, 22 involved in lobbying and 13 miscellaneous responses.

The responses were analysed by age, gender and field of work. There were no significant correlations between the nature of their professional involvement and either age or gender.

However, there were sufficient significant statistical correlations between the respondents' own involvement in their fields and their activities in Europe, suggesting, that working in the wider European context is regarded as a consistent part of many of the respondents's work. When asked which type of provision the European Union should formulate policy on and what should this policy consist of, there were 60 replies. Ten respondents thought that there should be no European involvement in policy formulation. However, the remainder thought that the policy should be general support for provision and expansion of adult education, equal and universal access and pan-European standards of provision. Furthermore, European policy should deal with basic rights and entitlements for adults, fostering good practice, international cooperative projects and monitoring member states' provision.

Turning now to the type of provision for which European Union policy was deemed necessary, the questionnaire suggested a variety of types including: adult basic education; training for trades and commerce; second chance education and training the unemployed; vocational education and training, including that for young adults; general adult education; distance education; educational television and libraries; art and drama education. Again, no significant correlations were found between either age or gender and aspects of policy quoted for various types of provision. With regard to respondents' field of work, the only significant correlations found to exist were between their own fields of activity and their belief that European policy should make provision for

it; for example, those in adult basic education thought European policy should make provision for it ($p<0.001$), those in vocational education of young people thought that there should be a European policy for its provision ($p<0.02$), those involved in training in industry and commerce thought that there should be a policy for it ($p<0.01$). The only time that age was a significant factor was that those in the 46 plus age group working in art and drama were significantly less likely than their younger counterparts to believe that there should be European involvement in their field ($p<.05$).

Respondents were also asked about new initiatives that they thought were desirable in Europe and there were 77 responses to this question and the following list summarises them: a Europe-wide credit based system of accreditation (13 responses); European standards for raising 'transportable' skills (10); development of European distance education learning packages (10); delivering cultural studies and partnerships (9); coherent and simple funding arrangements (6); collaborative research programme (6); a European Centre of Curriculum Development (6); arrangements for adult exchange visits along similar lines to ERASMUS, etc. (5); other replies such as provisions for learners age 50+ and European Union initiatives to motivate the workforce.

There was a question about the extent to which the professionals thought that there should be 'minimum entry qualifications' into the labour market. There has been some discussion on the continent about the possibility of offering direct training programmes to enable people to reach a desired level of qualifications before entering work. 90 people replied, of whom 40 considered it to be a desirable policy. The responses to this questions were analysed and age and gender produced no significant correlations. However, there was a correlation between education in general and the desirability of entry qualifications ($p<.04$).

In response to a number of subsequent questions about a minimum level of qualifications, 50 thought that such a policy would strengthen the economy; 63 thought they would help the general development of people; 66 thought that they would make people more employable; 37 thought that there should be explicit key qualifications; 16 thought that technical-professional skills constitute the most important part of the entry qualifications; 47 thought that general social and cultural skills are the most important.

The only significant correlations between the variables related to field of work and these were that those in training in industry thought that there should not be a minimum level in general social and cultural skills as part of the minimum entry level ($p<.01$), whereas those working in this latter field thought such qualifications desirable ($p<.005$). Significantly those working in the field of vocational education for young people were quite equally divided about this with 56 percent thinking them not to be important but 45 percent regarding them as important. Those in general adult education did not think that technical-professional skills were important as a level of minimum entry qualifications ($p<.02$).

Furthermore, respondents who disagreed with an obligation to obtain minimum entry qualifications in order to enter the labour market tended to agree that it would not be feasible to introduce such a system of England and Wales. But if such a policy were to be introduced it was generally considered to be the responsibility of government rather than either employers or employees. Further analyses showed that those working in the field, training in industry, were significantly more likely to consider that responsibility for implementation should lie with public authorities ($p<.005$), with those in the field of vocational and professional training concurring ($p<.04$).

Finally, the respondents were asked about the principle of subsidiarity. Eighty respondents tended to agree with the definition provided that 'higher authorities should not intervene in areas which belong to the legitimate power of local authorities'. Among the comments made was that it should be regarded as an enabling principle rather than a disabling one. There was, however, support for subsidiarity when one respondent stated that 'adult education works best when owned by those who implement it, on a local level'. Having provided these data, it is now necessary to raise some points about them.

Concluding discussion

It is to be noted that most professionals considered that there should be European involvement in their own field, and that they are already extensively involved in working in a European context, despite the government's fears about Europe. Perhaps the subsidiarity principle is an important one, although many educators appear to want more integration. While minimum entry qualifications to the labour force is not an issue in England and Wales, it is significant that a number of educators were willing to embrace it but it is clearly one that government will not implement because of cost.

The research, being based on a European project, would have been enhanced had the questionnaire been translated for meaning and context rather than merely for words. Comparative studies will be endangered in the future unless the differences in system and practice are more clearly recognised at the outset. However, as the co-operation between practising professionals develops these differences might become less apparent. As Europeanisation develops and co-operation is enhanced, so new forms of educational

practice will emerge and the views reported here may reflect one stage in a rapidly changing situation.

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Different Context: Same Praxis?

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Adult education has seen a move away from broadly based education for transformation towards a more vocational model of work. This has been thoroughly documented, sometimes with enthusiasm but more often with regret at the reduction and weakening of valuable and valued endeavours. However, in a different context there are opportunities for work which combines both transformative education and the vocational. In this paper I intend not only to explore this potential area of 'common territory' but also to examine the question of the rôle of reflective practice and its promotion within the current educational environment.

It's over three years since Jane Thompson lamented the rise of a preoccupation with 'strategic plans and targeting techniques ... franchising and credit transfers ... delivered with the kind of tenacity devoid of passion that characterises automatons released from business training schemes' (Thompson 1993). Workers in further education have found the potential for initiating certain forms of work with community groups has been reduced. In particular, the Further and Higher Education Act's arbitrary division of 'Schedule 2 subjects' (funded through the Further Education Funding Council) and 'non-Schedule 2' work has shifted work away from informal, community based education (Jones 1994). It could also be suggested that the change in the educational environment has had a particular impact within the 'old' universities where adult continuing education departments are situated. However, within higher education and despite the proliferation of strategic plans and targeting techniques, it can be argued that many of the 'old' values are alive and thriving. Within a few of the 'old' universities, many of the 'new' universities and other higher education institutions there are staff for whom terms such as 'transformative praxis', 'education for liberation', 'empowerment' and even 'equal opportunities' are the foundation of daily work, albeit in a different context. These staff are engaged in designing and delivering courses for students who are training for qualifications, in particular diplomas in higher education (Dip HEs) and degrees in youth and community work and in related areas such as community development. Degrees and Dip HEs in youth and community work include accreditation from the National Youth Agency (NYA). The NYA endorses courses which include the professional qualification. However, there is currently no central agency accrediting courses in community development so the precise nature of such courses ranges from institution to institution (Popple 1995 103).

Before considering course content, it is worth identifying who the target groups for these institutions are. In the past, many university adult continuing education (ACE) departments prioritised the needs of working class men, possibly at the expense of other groups such as women (Gardiner and O'Rourke 1991). More recently, work has been undertaken with community activists, members of Black communities, women - in other words with people who were involved with their communities in the broadest sense. Sometimes this work has taken the form of practitioner research such as the projects in Leeds documented by Ward and Taylor (Ward 1986).

People who are involved with their communities are also a key target group for youth and community work courses. Mature students form the majority of many institutions' intake to youth and community work courses despite the financial difficulties they will almost inevitably endure due to the end of the mature students' allowance, the decreasing value of the grants paid and, in many cases, family and other responsibilities. In fact, many colleges will only accept students over the age of 21 on such courses. The increase in access opportunities, from the establishment of dedicated access courses to the devising of sophisticated systems for the accreditation of prior experience and learning (APEL), has enabled mature students to enter degree courses where their previous experience is not only valued but is actually a prerequisite. Figures published by the NYA showed that, although qualified male workers outnumbered women, women represented 55% of the entrants to accredited courses in 1988. Efforts were also being made to recruit more Black people (NYA 1994). Government policies, especially with regard to the provision of grants, have reduced the possibility of many of the targeted students to study full-time but, in response, part-time opportunities have been increased.

It is apparent that the youth and community work courses are concentrating on targeting the same groups of people as ACE departments have made the focus of their work. However, does the shared territory stretch further? The aim of students engaged in studying for qualifications in youth and community work includes working towards the empowerment of people at a community level. Thus, I would argue that the staff who are teaching on such courses are engaged in educating people whose future lies in education for transformation, often as employees of voluntary or statutory organisations. In many cases they will engage in the very work which people who work in a range of both further and higher education contexts now may find difficult to pursue. It could be identified as education for transformation - but once removed since this is the education for the future informal educators. Rather than providing education for education's sake, such courses have the accreditation which enables people to find jobs and also have academic credibility. Indeed, I would argue that the dichotomy over the extent to which we, as educators, should be dealing with social and political transformation as opposed to individual advancement

via higher education is resolved. Moreover, the pedagogical methodologies contribute further since where student centred practices are employed, course assessment frequently includes a diverse range of methods, such as group projects and presentations. Thus the customary higher education focus on the individual student's production of essays and exam papers is superseded by a concentration on group assessments; on the fusion of collective advancement and personal transformation.

The 'solution' of the individual advancement/social transformation dichotomy generates several further questions. First, to what extent do the values underpinning training in community work, and, in particular, in community development skills, correspond with those of an education for transformation model of adult education? Secondly, given the centrality of the development of reflective practice/praxis to community work training, how do staff foster its development in students? And thirdly, since the nurturing of reflective practice in students brings our own praxis into focus, how have the ever-changing contexts in which staff in higher education institutions now work affected the possibility of building a clear, unequivocal vision on which to found such work?

It could be suggested that many of the most cherished elements of ACE are to be found in the curriculum and in the values underpinning such courses. They appear not only to share a similar value base but also to build their work on the writings of the same theorists such as, for example, Freire and Gramsci. This is particularly apparent in the training of youth and community workers in the skills and knowledge required for community work. The subject includes both practical strategies for undertaking such work and also an understanding of the theoretical basis of such interventions. The values underpinning training in community work are congruent with those underpinning one particular model of (community-based) adult education, as is apparent from consideration of their stated aims. Various bodies have set out their fundamental values and definitions of community work. Those devised by the Association of Community Workers include a useful indication of their working methods:

> Community workers should work in ways which
>
> - honestly confront issues of belief and ideology
>
> - start at the point where people themselves identify issues and problems and help them create change in the context of the beliefs above
>
> - always assist people to develop their own leadership and ability to speak for themselves
>
> - respect the contribution made by all people with whom they work, and oppose power relationships. (Association of Community Workers 1994, Section 3, 2)

Of course, like 'adult education' and 'community education', community work may be seen as a continuum. Three useful definitions have been given by Tom Lovett. First, he identified 'community organisation' which may be defined as 'maintaining and improving levels of social welfare'. Secondly he distinguished 'community development', a more community-based and more political process where the worker would be involved in assisting people to improve their own communities by undertaking collective activity. Lovett suggested that community development included a strong educational dimension. Thirdly he defined 'community action' where, rather than assisting people to cope with the circumstances in which they and their communities found themselves, the worker would be involved in encouraging the fundamental questioning of the underlying 'system' and seeking change at a societal level (Lovett 1980). Given the fact that students training for vocational qualifications are intending to become the paid workers within statutory and voluntary agencies, it is most realistic to focus their training on methods of community development which will involve them in being agents of change within communities.

In order to found the study of community development on theory, tutors look to Gramsci and Freire in particular. Their significance to community work has been stated recently by Popple who observed, 'if community workers truly want to assist people to liberate and empower themselves, they can gain much from reading and reflecting upon the work of Freire and Gramsci'. (Popple 1995, 102). Adding that 'they are both inspirational in their message that change is possible if one is clear about one's goals and strategies', he went on to recommend that research be undertaken which 'assists in the evolution of a community work theory and practice'. This is not to suggest that community work has not been based on theory hitherto but rather that it is time to respond to contemporary situations and to strengthen theoretical foundations.

Although community work is only one component of the training of the youth and community worker, the development of reflective practice (praxis) is a prerequisite for all aspects of the successful completion of the qualification. The NYA requires students to spend 40% of their course engaged in field work practice in youth work or community work agencies. It is this dimension of the course which provides the 'action'; the actual practising of the activity. On placement, students are advised, to quote from one college's handbook, 'you are submerged in an intensive environment ... surrounded by living practice examples and ... by workers already in the professional field ... you will be expected to reflect on your practice in grounded ways through analysing

your actual daily experiences' (Heathfield 1995). Moreover, the development of professional praxis is fostered by the integration of periods of college-based study (offering a particular opportunity for reflection following and preceding action/practice) and placements in relevant agencies (providing the opportunity for action/practice following and preceding reflection).

Whilst in college, students' understanding of the rôle of theory and its relationship to practice/action is nurtured by college staff, for example through the use of case studies and rôle plays based around students' own placement experiences. During placements, competent agency supervisors encourage students to link the work they are doing to the theories they have learned in college as well as providing models of good professional reflexive practice.

Whilst the model of praxis provided by agency staff during students' placements is one component of student learning, it is, of course, equally important to consider the rôle of college staff. What is the nature of the part they play? The pressures engendered by the increasing current of managerialism within the organisational environment of higher education may be seen as undermining the potential for reflection amongst staff. Stress on maximising contact hours, on engaging in consultancies and other endeavours which bring in funds, on producing publications which contribute to a department's ratings, on strategic planning and targeting techniques and on an increasing range of administrative and pastoral activities has left less opportunity for reflection. If a contract allots 'research and scholarly activity' less than 5% of a lecturer's time, it is clearly not regarded as a significant aspect of one's professional performance.

However, if observing others' praxis promotes students' learning, higher education staff have a responsibility to provide a good model. And if a mature and effective professional praxis is the consequence of the balance between practice/action and reflection, then the reduction of the potential for reflection is liable to damage the quality of the praxis of staff working with students whose own professional development is an ultimate aim.

Methods of promoting and maximising student learning have been the subject of research, as have ways of increasing student learning on placement. However, the staff who teach youth and community work face unique tensions in teaching students the philosophy underpinning - and methods of engaging in - informal education and empowerment within an environment which is intrinsically formal. It could be suggested that there is a contradiction in actively demonstrating one's praxis when this involves reflection in addition to action. Nonetheless, it is an essential dimension of creating an environment which promotes learning. Whilst students in the college context may be seen as being primarily at a reflexive stage in the circle of praxis, the staff who are engaged in teaching them are engaged in practice/action and, moreover, are working within a context which could be accused of failing to promote reflection. Obviously this is a fundamental contradiction. What is to be done?

When teaching skills and theory to youth and community work students, it could be argued that the maintenance of academic objectivity (the very existence of which has, of course, been challenged) is not only difficult but also actually undesirable and unhelpful. If lecturers **overtly** include themselves in their teaching and demonstrate how they've located their own practice in theory, then students are more likely to be able to move towards doing the same. This could include demonstrating how one can relate theories to one's own experiences through the use of personal case studies or instances. It could also involve explaining the rationale behind activities and theoretical input. For example, the guidelines I devised for a recent piece of research conducted by students identified the various skills which they would use in its completion and highlighted the way in which these were relevant to them as youth and community workers.

It is apparent that values, the demise of which has been mourned in other contexts, are thriving in a different and expanding range of settings; surely a cause for celebration by anyone for whom education for transformation, empowerment and reflective practice form the educational *sine qua non*. Any lament should be at the paucity of opportunities for people whose underlying philosophy is similar to meet together. As we await the impact of political change within the UK and the impact of a new millennium, new networks could be built to unite those whose work is founded on the same ideals. The context is different but the praxis is built on the same beliefs.

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A case study in postmodern pedagogy for graduate education

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This case study reports how an innovative doctoral programme implements perspectives on education that contrast boldly with the belief-systems that are implicit in typical PhD education. The educational values that guide the programme's pedagogy are natural corollaries to the epistemological tenets of postmodernism.

We begin with a brief description of the programme, followed by a discussion of the programme values and their pedagogical implications. We conclude with a case example.

Description of the case study programme

The programme is situated in the School for Transformative Learning, a new school within the California Institute of Integral Studies. The Institute seeks to integrate the intellectual and spiritual insights of Western and Eastern traditions as represented by the integral philosophy of the Indian sage, Sri Aurobindo.

When students are admitted, they become part of a cohort, studying together for three years in either a weekend college or an online, distance learning community. Their studies focus on the transformation of human systems. Students are mature adults who have rich work and life histories that reflect their commitment to the transformation of human systems; they come from diverse backgrounds in areas such as teaching and administration, human resource development, health and human services, expressive arts, social justice, and intercultural communication.

Programme values and their pedagogical implications

With its promise of objective truth and an epistemology that separates subject from object, the paradigm of modernism has dominated our cultural institutions, including higher education. Although our universities now actively lead a dialogue about modernism and postmodernism, as institutions their actions seem still embedded in the values of modernism.

We take seriously that the paradigm of modernism is no longer an adequate conceptual ground for higher education. Engaging the postmodern narrative, we ask ourselves how we might construct a learning environment that reflects the postmodern argument that the knower cannot be separated from what is known. We believe that knowledge is participatory, and participating is a necessary condition for knowing; learning is holistic and knowing is transdisciplinary; diversity is a necessary condition for achieving our programme goals; our knowledge about our programme goals and pedagogy is tentative.

We assume that our beliefs about learning, knowledge, and knowing are tenets for a postmodern pedagogy and might apply to any learning activity in the contemporary world. Our beliefs about our programme goals are context specific.

We now explain what we mean by each of our four assumptions and how they guide our pedagogy.

Our first assumption is that knowledge is participatory, and that participating is therefore a precondition for knowing. Knowledge takes shape in three ways. First is a kind of personal knowledge, the residue in one's bones from participating in the flow of experiencing. This knowledge derives from sensory participation. A second form of personal knowledge derives from conscious reflection. It is created by distilling sensory knowing into language, a snapshot if you will, of cumulative knowing to the point of distillation. Third is knowledge that is consensually validated by a community as a distillation of its cumulative knowing. This knowledge derives from community participation in conscious reflection. Our conceptualization of the first two forms of knowledge is influenced by John Heron (1992) and David Kolb (1984), the third by Jack Mezirow (1991).

If knowing is participating, and knowledge is participatory, then both knowing and knowledge reside in the lives and activities of the participants. This position contrasts with the assumptions that undergird the modern academy's interactions with its constituencies. Perceiving itself as the repository for knowledge and the guardian of procedure for creating new knowledge, the academy employs scholars who create new knowledge while adhering to rigorous disciplinary standards. These scholars are also expected to teach the next generation what the knowledge is and to socialize a select few into the rigors of scholarship. In this tradition, knowledge is separate from the participation of the knowing person. The role of the scholar-as-teacher is to act as a conduit between the knowledge and the learner. The scholar-as-teacher is also expected to judge how successful the learner is in mastering knowledge and skills.

In contrast to the modern academy, our curriculum structures student experience as the source of knowledge and fosters shared responsibility between students and faculty for creating the teaching/learning transaction. A core curriculum broadly defines four continuing learning strands - philosophical and cultural foundations of an integral worldview, transforming human systems, research, and integrative seminar. Within these four strands, students and faculty collaborate in shaping the specific

content and activities that will give form to the learning objectives for each strand. We refer to this strategy as the emergent curriculum. At the end of its three years as a learning community, as one requirement for admission to candidacy, the cohort must demonstrate its competency as a learning system. The cohort analyzes how its particular implementation of the curricular goals has fostered its development, thus building theory about learning systems from the text of its own experience. Academic progress is monitored throughout the three years in a series of peer and faculty collaborations.

Our second assumption is that learning is holistic and knowing is transdisciplinary. Learning is a process of coming to know. Since knowing is being awake to the flow of experiencing, learning is becoming awake to the whole of one's experience, whether that experience is reading a book, organizing a community, walking on an ocean beach, exploring the structure of a subatomic reality, examining a dream, or coaching executive teams in industry. Experience is kinesthetic as well as cognitive, affective as well as intellectual, imaginal as well as conceptual, intuitive as well as logical. Learning and knowing depend on capacity for conscious participation through all of the senses, and conscious reflection on all dimensions of experience.

The idea of disciplines is rooted in a modernist epistemology that attempts to understand objective reality by separating the whole into manageable parts. Interdisciplinary inquiry combines more than one discipline, but is still bounded by fragmentation. For example, an interdisciplinary approach to understanding racism might find us studying the history of relations between different racial groups, the psychology of being part of a group that experiences systematic discrimination, and the sociology of how systematic discrimination is institutionalized. Clearly to acquire knowledge about racism we need to be interdisciplinary - to examine the experience through many lenses. But to know racism we need more: we need to understand the experience in its own terms in a way that is not circumscribed by the disciplinary lenses we have constructed. We need to find a way of knowing that begins with the experience itself. The intent of transdisciplinary inquiry is to understand the whole of an experience.

We are committed to creating a graduate programme that is congruent with the holistic quality of meaningful learning; we create learning activities that draw broadly on multiple ways of knowing, complementing critical reflection with art, movement, ritual, and interpersonal sharing. We strive to create a transdisciplinary inquiry by focussing on lived experience of individuals and the group.

Our third assumption is that our programme goals can be achieved only when the diversity that characterizes our culture is mirrored in the diversity of our student/faculty learning communities. Capacity to respond to the increasing diversity in our culture in a manner *that is creative rather than destructive is* critical for the health of our communities and our planet. One key is the ability to surface and confront our own limiting beliefs about race, gender, age, and sexual orientation. A second is the capacity to empathically understand others' differing experience, values, and beliefs. A third is the ability to frame others' differing values and beliefs as creative resources. Prerequisite for learning these capacities is participation in a diverse community, one in which diversity itself is consciously valued as a resource for common learning. As a consequence, one priority for our recruitment of faculty, staff and students is to ensure that our student body, faculty and staff mirror the diversity in the larger culture.

Our fourth assumption is that our knowledge is tentative. We are between paradigms in the social sciences, and in this anomalous state we realize that each assumption that we make is proximate and deserves to be translated into action and accompanied by ongoing and rigorous reflection to discover the effects of our actions in practice. In this in-between state, in short, we believe that the most responsible posture for any educational venture is to subject all premises to rigorous inquiry and consider all programmemes to be experiments. As a consequence, we involve all participants - faculty, students and staff - in a continuing process of evaluation and redesign.

A programme story about the MIX

The following narrative tells the story of how a group of incoming students analyzed a serious discrepancy between the programme's stated mission and its implementation. They took steps to challenge the administration to make appropriate changes and helped bring the changes about.

The MIX story is written in this version by Mat Schwarzman. Although Mat refers to the group as the MIX throughout this narrative, the group actually chose its name at the end of its first year of study. Students had been trying for months to a select a name. When someone offered the idea of MIX (to stand for Multicultural Inquiry eXchange), an instant, enthusiastic 'yes' arose from the group. The name captured then, and continues to capture, the essential experience of this group. Here is Mat's interpretation of the story:

We are the MIX, the Multicultural Inquiry eXchange, and this is our creation story. Our group is the second residential doctoral cohort in the new School for Transformative Learning in San Francisco. We began our graduate work in August 1993 with a six day intensive orientation. At that time, the group consisted of two faculty and nine students. Both faculty and eight of nine students were European Americans; one student was African American.

During the August intensive each member made an hour-long autobiographical presentation. Combining anecdotes, images, songs, and chronologies, each attempted - passionately but carefully - to disclose personal information that seemed relevant for fostering understanding among people who were beginning a long and no doubt difficult journey. Victor, the African American member of the group, was one of the last. As he spoke, it was clear how different his story was because of its emphasis on how the color of his skin affected his life. A powerful silence came over the group.

As someone accustomed to being in white-dominated situations where his experiences were likely to be unique, Victor tried to protect himself from the likelihood of further probing by requesting beforehand that his story be left to stand on its own, without discussion. 'This is necessary for a lot of people of color,' he reported, 'otherwise we can be turned into white people's objects of curiosity.' Nonetheless, Suzanne pressed Victor to answer questions. Two or three times he refused her request. Wanting to know more, understand more, Suzanne eventually posed the rhetorical question, 'In your silence, aren't you being just as racist against white people?' All hell broke loose. Victor was propelled to the explosion that he had tried to avoid. 'This is just how it starts,' he wrote later, 'and it ends with racist stereotypes of violent African American males being reinforced ...'

No one in the group remembers many details of the next few minutes. In many ways, they're unimportant. Members disagreed about the implications of Suzanne's and Victor's argument. Some thought that Victor was being reverse racist, others felt Suzanne was unfeeling if sincere, and still others argued that this type of incident was going to continue unless something was done about the radically imbalanced racial composition of the group. Some members threatened to leave if steps were not taken to remedy the situation. Others threatened to leave if they were.

Eventually, the group agreed to lobby the school administration for support to re-open admissions in order to recruit students of color to balance the learning community. Collectively, the group drafted a letter to the dean and secured a promise of recruitment scholarships. Members pledged to organize an aggressive recruitment effort and participate actively in the accelerated admissions process.

By the time of the group's September weekend, the MIX had become a group of seventeen. Thanks to an incredible organizing effort to which almost every member contributed, the MIX was able to attract three African American women, two African American men, a Chicana, a Chicano, and a Chinese American woman - eight new people of color in all. Since that time, even with attrition, whites have been in a minority in the MIX.

Writing from the vantage point of two years later, it is clear that this opening episode is central to who and what the MIX is. Having to unearth, expose and negotiate deeply held beliefs and ways of being in order to be and work together has profoundly transformed almost everyone in the group. At every turn, race and ethnicity are lenses for understanding human systems and for deconstructing social issues.

Conclusion

The challenge by students in August 1993 to the School for Transformative Learning was a profound catalyst for the maturation of the school's espoused beliefs. Although the school was committed to the importance of building theory from the text of student experience as well as to the inherent need for diversity in any meaningful vision of systems transformation, it had not made student diversity a priority amidst the multiple demands of launching the new school and its programmes. The school's supportive response to the students' request for re-opened admissions is an example of its commitment to a continuing process of experiment, evaluation and change. The new cohort, the group that would name itself the MIX, created a nexus between the dual programme commitments to diversity and to participatory knowledge. In her case study of the MIX, Alexis Kaminsky (1995) notes that

race was a central discourse in this cohort. For its third-year demonstration of competency project, in which it is required to analyze the text of its experience as a learning system, the MIX builds theory about the relationship between multiculturalism, race, and transformative learning (MIX, 1996).

This case analysis illustrates how the educational values that guide our programme's pedagogy take form. Our understanding of the values that constitute our pedagogical enactment of a postmodern worldview deepens with each cohort that engages the curriculum. Since it was initiated three years ago, seven groups have entered the programme. Themes of diversity, holism, experimentation, collaboration and shared power that are illustrated in the MIX's story permeate all cohorts.

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Working class women in further education - are they being taken seriously?

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This paper will consider the implications, within the context of contradictory policy directions, of the present developments in vocational education for present and future generations of working class women who want an education that will provide them with 'really useful knowledge' where

> Such knowledge connects the cultural with the scientific, with the practical, makes no crude vocational and non-vocational distinctions and depends for its curriculum (on) the concerns and interests of those for whom education cannot be the luxury of leisure or progression, but must help to make sense of intolerable circumstances with a view to their challenge. (Hughes 1995, 99)

Working class women's education has always been adversely affected by their social position resulting in a poor qualitative experience, an emphasis on 'girls' subjects' and low educational attainment. Consequently, those working class women who do decide to give education a second chance are most likely to enter further education and therefore some type of vocational education or training - this is due both to their expectations (or lack of them) and their educational level. The 'women's areas' within further education are, of course, secretarial studies, health and social care (including child care) and hair dressing and beauty therapy which clearly illustrates the power of education to reinforce and reproduce social relations.

I worked in further education on health and social care courses for the last ten years and during that time increasing numbers of working class women were enrolling on vocational courses. They were all asked why they had chosen the subject area and almost without exception it was because they thought that they at least knew something about looking after others and were very uncertain about what else they knew (educationally). They also wanted a qualification they thought would be useful and generally, after qualifying, they expected to work as a care assistant or nursery nurse. The women's confidence and expectations often changed radically during their course despite the limitations of vocational education. The women were openly enthusiastic for 'really useful knowledge' and my research showed that during their courses some of the women did experience a radical change in their understanding of the world and their position in it.

> Coming to college has made me view life, the family and society from a different view; with a wider understanding. (BA22-1[1])
>
> Coming to college has given me a positive channel for all my energies. I've had to re-evaluate my opinions and the way I communicate with others. (BA9-1)

I have been considering these changes in understanding from within the perspectives of perspective transformation and critical thinking but they could also be understood in terms of conscientisiation. In this paper, I want to argue that, despite all the odds, it has been possible for perspective transformation to occur on at least some vocational courses in health and social care but it is doubtful if this is still possible. The reasons for this are the emphasis on competence-based education and the effects of educational and social policies.

Working class women are now the largest group in many further education colleges and are essential to the colleges' survival. This is because there are fewer school leavers entering further education due to competition between schools and colleges for students, increasing availability of vocational courses in schools and the size of the school leaving population. Without mature students further education would fail to meet its recruitment targets and therefore would lose funding but further education fails to meet the educational or social needs of women students.

Working class women in further education, almost by definition, have had a poor educational experience and are unsure of their own abilities because of previous educational failures; some women need additional help with literacy and numeracy. Working class women are usually in receipt of social security, many are single parents and some have other problems. It is not now possible to leave employment, however low paid, to enter education because discretionary grants are no longer available and unemployment benefit is not available for up to six months if one leaves work voluntarily. Return to further education is often, although not always, precipitated by some life change and for many women it becomes a life changing experience, previously, many women would have said it was a change for the better.

The government and the CBI, among others, are in agreement that there is a national skills shortage and that this affects economic competitiveness and unemployment rates. The extent to which training affects competitiveness and unemployment is

[1] All code numbers after quotes refer to individual women who took part in my research study.

questioned by economists who would say that it only accounts for about 20% of unemployment (Hutton 1996). However, the government has formulated the economic problem as due to a lack of skills and National Targets for Education and Training (NTETS) have been developed to raise training levels. National vocational qualifications (NVQs) are the mode for the training which is intended to be the solution to economic problems. It is doubtful how a training philosophy that emphasises measuring what trainees can already do is going to increase the insufficient skills pool. This is in addition to other severe doubts about the appropriateness of NVQs (for example, Smithers1993; Hyland 1994). More college places have been made available in order to meet these targets.

Students need to have some way to support themselves financially. Discretionary grants for further education are now almost non-existent; previously, they were available from local authorities to many women. Discretionary grants were means tested so the only women not to benefit from them were those with working partners. Women who previously would have received a discretionary grant now have to rely on social security - under social security regulations a claimant can study up to 21 hours per week (to become 16 in October) provided that they are available for work and willing to leave their course as soon as an offer of work is received. Local social security offices now enforce the regulations more strictly (albeit with local differences) and there are many instances of adults being forced to leave courses or lose all their benefits (see, for example, Ward and Nash 1996). Welfare rights advisers believe that many of these claimants would probably win their cases on appeal; however most cannot afford to appeal as their benefit is stopped until the appeal is heard - this is weeks or months later. The courses that the claimants are being forced to leave are vocational courses which often have a high proportion of those completing the course successfully going on to employment (although often low paid). Effectively, and sometimes actually, the students who have to leave courses are told to stay at home and do nothing. Those doing voluntary work have the same experience - often these students are doing voluntary work as a way of gaining work experience and so improving their chances of gaining paid employment.

The contrasts between training and social security policies are striking. The government believes that economic problems are the result of a national skills shortage so their policy is to increase training and, as a result, there are indeed more college places available. The government also wants to reduce its expenditure, particularly social security expenditure; many MPs have been critical of people who, they claim, are happy to be sitting at home making no effort to get off benefits. Cuts in local authority budgets mean the end of discretionary grants and therefore students are forced to rely on social security benefits, but the practice of the Department of Social Security (DSS) is to force them off training courses that are approved and promoted by the Department of Employment and Education (DfEE), to remain inactive and thereby increase the chance that they will remain on benefits. The skills pool does not increase and the individual continues to rely on social security - two outcomes which are opposite to stated government policy.

Once a woman does manage to enter further education, despite the obstacles resulting from government policy, she is unlikely to find the climate conducive to extending or developing students. Further education colleges have to follow the imperatives of the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) despite supposedly being independent entities. The FEFC exerts its power through its funding mechanisms and intensive four yearly inspections; it leaves the detail of operational policies to the discretion of the colleges. The FEFC implements government policy - the first disagreement the council had with the government was at the beginning of 1996 over an aspect of administration of the European Social Fund (ESF).

Unit costs are the fundamental criteria for the FEFC and these costs have been driven low and then lower still. The concomitant stress that this produces has contributed to low morale among staff (which has been exacerbated by the long running contracts dispute and compounded, in too many colleges, by weak management). The continual emphasis on cost effectiveness means more and more students being taught by fewer staff with diminished resources. In my own college there was an expectation in September 1991 that each full-time group of students would have a timetable of at least twenty three hours teaching a week - by September 1996 this expectation is for a maximum of fifteen and a half hours. To add insult to injury, further education managers are enthusiastically developing open learning workshops where one or two facilitators, with some technical support, supervise 80 or more 'customers' - all of whom are following self directed learning packages. This trend to individual learning programmes and self directed learning means that much group interaction is lost - something that women usually say has helped them to remain on, and complete courses despite personal and academic difficulties.

Most further education students follow competence-based courses. This is often cited by awarding bodies such as BTEC as proving the increasing popularity of such courses, but the reality is that there are no other choices for students because

there is a deliberate policy to withdraw all equivalent courses. There are well documented problems with the underlying philosophies of NVQs and GNVQs as well as with their structure, content, implementation and assessment. One of the most serious problems is that the prescribed content of these qualifications enhances the ideological control of knowledge. GNVQs are promoted as increasing flexibility for students but at the same time the timetabling and content of external tests imposes rigidity. National statistics on completion and retention are not reliable and the DfEE is establishing a GNVQ database this year because there is a strong concern that completion and retention rates are poor. The indications are that 47 percent of advanced GNVQ students had successfully completed their course at the end of two years while the equivalent figure for national diplomas (the courses that preceded advanced GNVQs) and A levels is 70 percent (Richardson *et al*, 1995. FEFC, 1995). This means that if women are encouraged to begin a GNVQ course they have less than a 50 percent chance of completing it. Furthermore, GNVQs have not been designed with the needs of mature students in mind but for young people who were 'disenchanted' with school. Is it acceptable to encourage women to begin such a course in view of the many difficulties, financial and personal, they are bound to face when the chances are that they will not complete the course anyway?

Educational and social policies therefore are having a detrimental effect on the ability of adults to participate in further education and on the quality of education within further education. The training policy is based on competence-based qualifications that fail to meet their own stated purposes and are educationally inadequate. Employers are said to need workers with transferable skills but they also want compliant and uncritical workers who will accept worsening conditions and pay whilst shareholders and directors receive increasing bonuses. The attempt to produce such workers has led to increasing ideological control of the content of students' learning with consequent diminished opportunities to gain really useful knowledge. This situation affects working class women at two different levels. The first level is that it is increasingly difficult for them to obtain training on courses that offer any prospect of enhancing their employment prospects - this is even true when the limitations of the vocational qualifications are accepted or ignored. The second level is that where the women have some prospect of education, in its broad sense, ideological and financial control means that the opportunities to gain 'really useful knowledge' are, at the least, severely constrained. The effects of both levels mean that, within further education, it is extremely unlikely that working class women will 'be taken seriously'.

> In teaching women we have two choices: to lend our weight to the forces that indoctrinate women to passivity, self-depreciation, and a sense of powerlessness, in which case the issue of "taking women students seriously" is a moot one; or to consider what we have to work against, as well as with, in ourselves, in our students, in the content of the curriculum, in the structure of the institution, in the society at large. (Rich 1984, 240)

The future appears to have arrived in further education and it leaves and will leave working class women where they have always been - between a rock and a hard place.

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Adults@learning.net: a reflexive critique of cooperative networked learning[1]

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Introduction

This paper looks at one future scenario for adult education: networked learning.

Networked (online) learning across electronic systems such as the Internet is an emerging area of interest amongst adult educators (Mason and Kaye 989; cConnell 1994). Groupware, such as computer conferencing systems, supports the work of networked learners and offers the opportunity for adult educators to sustain their educational values in what might seem like a technologically determined learning environment.

Working in this novel environment offers new opportunities for us, but also requires constant critical reflection. This paper focuses on an MA in management learning for part-time adult learners which is run using a combination of face to face workshops and 'online' computer conferences (Hodgson and McConnell 1992; McConnell 1994). On the course, we try to develop a critical perspective on our role as tutors, in terms of working with participants on the design of the programme and in carrying out cooperative, action research of the experience of taking part (as tutor and participant) in the programme. This paper considers only one aspect of the overall research: participants' experiences of working online.[2] It is very much 'research in progress'.

A phenomenological case study of the experience of participating in the course

The focus here is on the groups' defined purposes within the computer conferences and their experience of working collaboratively online. This part of the study is concerned with developing an understanding of the ways in which groups 'function' in computer conferences, from the perspective of the participants in the groups. These are essentially a series of phenomenological case-studies aimed at being open to the concerns, constructs, assumptions and logic of the participants in the groups. This cooperative research design allows us to match the groups' defined purposes with their own analysis of the groups' functions, processes and longitudinal development. In addition we (participants and tutors alike) are in a position to develop an understanding of the process of learning as it occurs online.

This was done by gathering the groups together for such occasions. We focused on why the group worked in the way it did. We used transcripts of the computer conferences to stimulate recall of the group work where necessary. We were interested in how participants perceive the online group processes and what sense they make of working in this way; their views on the 'benefits' of online group work; gender issues; group development over time; roles people adopt online, and so on. All of this was underpinned by an interest in the ways in which the groups communicate online, and the ways in which knowledge is negotiated, presented, received, shared, controlled, understood and misunderstood by tutors and participants.

The study

For the purposes of this research we worked intensively with one learning group which varied in size from six to nine people and which worked together over a two-year period from April 1993 to March 1995. These were people who are themselves educators and trainers, as well as being participants on the MA, and who agreed to work with us in a process of thoughtful reflection on their experience of working together online.

We met with them on three occasions during that two year period with each session lasting around two to two and a half hours. Each meeting was tape recorded. In addition we analysed the groups' computer conference material.

The analysis

I want to focus here on only two aspects of the analysis : the development of the group throughout the online period; and critical learning incidents chosen by participants.

The development of the group throughout the online period

Conference transcripts ware analysed to determine how the group's development proceeded throughout one online period (March 1994 - July 1994). Four conference items had been set up by the participants. Table 1 shows how the groups' collaborative work proceeded :

[1] This research was supported by an ESRC grant (R00023453101). My co-researchers were Ginny Hardy and Vivien Hodgson. I would like to thank Michael Reynolds (a co-tutor) and participants on the MA course for their cooperation in carrying out the research.

[2] Further details of the research are obtainable from the author.

Table 1: Group Development		
Item 1	Item 2	Item 3/4
1) Introduction and sharing ideas about what they were working towards.		
2) Formal summary of groups' work presented by one participant who was acting as 'manager' of group (April 10th).		
3) Consensus making period	Reflection on their group processes begins	
4) Each participant working on their assigned part of the work	Emergence of some reservations about what they are doing	
5) Participant 'manager' managing the the process and timescale		Two participants upload their work and offer each other comments. Tutors also offer comments.
6) Comments on participants work offered by all	Disclosure about frustrations and non-participation by some people	
7) Participant 'manager' managing and anticipating deadline		
8) One participant asks others how they are getting on with their sections of the work (critical incident?)	General discussion about the group's process continues	
9) Another participant enters her section of work		
10) Participant 'manager' managing the process, with much discussion from others; moving towards the deadline; asking themselves how to transfer what has been happening online to next face-to-face workshop	positive feelings about the process noted by some participants	
11) Participants attend face to face workshop - process continues concerning collaborative seminar paper.		

Several points can be made about this :

- the punctuated nature of the group work : the work of the group does not proceed continuously but is characterised by periods of activity and periods of inactivity (commented on at stage 6);

- the group's development does not conform easily to any existing 'model' of group development that I know of, but there is a 'start', 'middle' and 'end' period of online work. This requires further analysis.

From the analysis of the group's face-to-face discussions about this online period, several themes emerged which are briefly listed below :

Problems of working cooperatively and making collective decisions. Here discussion centred round the way in which the group actually communicated about its collective online project. At times there was good communication about what they were trying to achieve, but also at times they failed to communicate and some people felt they were just 'running' with

whatever was last on the 'table', with little discussion or checking out amongst themselves.

The cooperative learning contract: implicit or explicit. Participants discussed their expectations concerning the level of commitment and cooperation in the online group work. Although an informal 'contract' about this had been agreed prior to the online period, it soon became evident that in practice there was much that had not been negotiated. It was only during the activity of being online and trying to collaborate on their project that issues relating to the contract merged. This concern over the 'contract' was a major theme running throughout the entire conference, and one which was not resolved to everyone's satisfaction.

Roles online: formalised and non-formalised. The group had elected one participant to act as conference 'manager' or facilitator with the express power to manage the group. This seemed to work very well in the early stages of the group's work, but in later stages the manager experienced frustration about the lack of collective clarity in purpose, and the decreasing level of activity which he perceived in the group.

Other participants from time to time were perceived to take on specific informal roles, such as questioner, observer, 'lurker', information giver and so on. None of these roles had been formally negotiated by the group, and there was considerable discussion about how and why people had chosen to work in this way.

'Troughs' and non-interaction. The concern here was around the question of what leads to

This might be viewed as a continuum:

online group is work---------- online group/work distinction blurred ---------- online group is not work

The consequences of these different perceptions seemed to determine to some extent how people engaged with the online group work. For those who saw it as 'work', the group was a major (sometimes main) focus for their professional lives. They looked to the group to provide support, challenge and discussion which they could not always get anywhere else very easily. One person who shared this view was self-employed. Those who did not see it as work often had colleagues in their place of paid work with whom they worked cooperatively on other projects, and they felt less need to have this relationship online.

During discussion about this, participants showed an awareness of the consequences of these different views for the success of the online learning community. Those who viewed the online work as 'not work' said they now saw what their position meant for the community. There was a real willingness to address the issue in the next online period.

something 'suddenly' happening after an inactive period, and discussion taking off again? Participants perceived that the work of the group was not evenly distributed throughout the period. They were aware that there were times when there was a frenzy of online activity, where they were all (mostly) engaged in working together. At other times, little happened. No one could easily say why this punctuated group process (as described above) took place. A detailed examination of the conference transcript may provide some illumination of this issue.

Problem of asynchronous communication and responding online. Participants observed that working asynchronously had its advantages in cooperative work, but also proved difficult at times. For example, during the period when there was considerable discussion online, participants' comments tended to get entered out of sequence, so making it difficult to disentangle the line of thought taking place.

'Barriers' to group work and cooperation online. Here the interest was around whether the group's online (MA) work was perceived as being somehow different to their paid work. There were three different perspectives on what constituted 'group work', and what constituted 'paid' work: some participants viewed the groups' work as a major part of their working life. There was no distinction between the participant's online work and their 'paid' work; some did not view it as 'work' at all (work was where they did their 'paid' work); others could not easily make any distinction between the two views.

Critical incidents

At another meeting of the group, the focus was on a mixture of identifying 'critical incidents' during the last online period of work (during which they were carrying out their research dissertation projects), and discussion of these incidents. The two were not clearly separated during the meeting.

Some of the incidents raised were not discussed in any depth. One particularly interesting aspect of this discussion was the way in which the group reflected on their online work as a group, their relationships, expectations and different approaches so that the lines between 'doing research' and personal and group learning were blurred.

As with much of this research, aspects of the online experience were highlighted, but interpretations of what a particular aspect meant, or what caused it, varied greatly. For example, this group had a number of unusual aspects to it. Four people dropped out for

various, and legitimate, personal reasons in the two weeks before the course began leaving just six participants in the group. During the two years of the MA, one other participant left, one tutor moved to another post and another participant died. Clearly all of this had a huge impact on the group and made it very hard to disentangle aspects which were directly related to the online work.

Out of the analysis a number of themes emerged.

Expectations/responsibilities. Some broad, general comments were made in this area. Explicit distinctions were made between how people saw their responsibilities to the rest of the group online and face to face. Some people felt more accountable when they were face to face; others felt a greater obligation to be supportive online. When they were face to face, some felt an obligation to be more probing.

Experience of and approaches to being online, and the technology. Comparisons were drawn between face to face and online discussions. One participant felt the asynchronous nature of conferences stopped continuity of discussion, yet he felt that there was enormous creativity online. Another talked of the dilemma of multiple online conversations combined with the ability to be reflective, weighed against the possibility of up-loading screenfuls of 'thoughtful' (yet perhaps longish) text.

One conference item in the transcript was begun by a student as part of her data gathering for her dissertation on the topic of career management. She asked the rest of the group to say something about their career and what the term meant to them. Everyone responded over the next few weeks. They all said how interesting and engaging they had found these discussions. This was portrayed as an example of the medium and the group 'working well'.

One difference in approach to 'going online' was in terms of how different individuals presented that to themselves and others. One person spoke of it in mechanical terms. A lot of his usual day to day work was on his PC and so connecting into Lancaster was not seen as that different. It was another work task. 'It's not 'I'm going on for a chat' or 'I'm going to do some work' it's 'I'm going online'' Another participant talked of 'I'm just going to talk to Lancaster for twenty minutes' and made a point of bringing in and involving his partner and friends. Another had involved his children but stopped doing that because of the swearing online!

Tutor/participant roles and relationships. There was a view that there was a sharp split between tutors on the one hand and participants on the other. This seemed more marked online where it was easier to 'split' off tutors. One tutor certainly spoke of not feeling as 'heard' online as face to face, and having greater 'power' face to face. It felt as if sometimes online the tutor was never sure how his comments were received. Other tutors, however, did not experience this and felt their contributions were 'heard' and received online.

Discussion focussed on what the role of the tutor was generally in a programme like this that had a philosophy which involved cooperative tutor-participant design - a major and unresolved issue for the group. And what then happens when you go online? Does it become magnified, dealt with, avoided?

Comment

We have found that this 'reflective critique' approach to researching online learning has helped both tutors and participants understand the nature and processes they are involved in during their online work. The experience of working online has become observable. This approach to learning has allowed participants and tutors to make changes to the design of the MA programme on the basis of their collective experience, and to the participants and tutors becoming more observant of their relations online.

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Networked learning : the Internet, computer conferencing and adult education

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This workshop will be of interest to anyone using, or thinking of using, the Internet and online communications in their professional practice. In particular it will be of interest to those involved in 'second generation' distance learning who want to move to 'third generation' (McConnell, 1995) (interactive and discursive) distance learning.

In the workshop I will focus on networked (online) adult learning. By way of an example of networked learning, I will focus on some postgraduate Masters programmes that I am involved in which employ the use of the Internet and computer conferences for networked, cooperative learning purposes.

During the workshop I hope we will be able to link into the Internet. I will demonstrate a Web (World Wide Web) site designed for an MEd in Telematics Learning, and indicate how it supports, and is used by, the distant learners on the course. I will also demonstrate the use of online discussion groupware and introduce the audience to computer conferences.

Computer mediated communications

A major concern of the workshop is to consider the potential of computer mediated ommunications in adult learning. Computer mediated communications (CMC) systems, of which computer conferencing is an example, allow users to participate in educational activities 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, all year round. Users communicate with each other (at different times) by typing the text of their communications into the computer conference area, where all other communications can be read and commented on. Computer mediated communications allow for communal, interactive group communications between people who may be dispersed geographically or temporally.

This workshop will look at the educational implications of CMC for adult learning. Some questions about the use of this new medium which we might consider include :

What are the characteristics of CMC ?

What are its educational strengths and weaknesses ?

How can it be used in adult education ?

What are the problems and difficulties in use?

What actually happens in an educational computer conference ?

How can CMC be incorporated into adult education ?

It is hoped that participants in the workshop will have the opportunity to formulate their own questions about the use of CMC and the Internet in their own professional practices. Examples of CMC group work with adult learners will be available for analysis and discussion. Participants may be interested in comparing these examples with their experience of adult learners' discussions face to face.

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Recognizing diversity: creating a woman centered focus group methodology

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Introduction

Adult educators face a welcome challenge in Canada. Our federal government has embraced a vision of gender equality defined as 'the equal valuing by society of both the similarities and differences between women and men, and the varying roles that they play' (Status of Women Canada 1996, 3). Researchers are encouraged to design methodologies which reflect their understanding of gender issues and to verify face validity with the participants (Status of Women Canada 1995, 1996). This challenge guided my struggle to design a methodology for my heuristic inquiry *Sustaining energy for caring: the experience of mothers who are nurses*.

In this paper I argue that reported focus group methodologies, which developed in market research and later emerged in educational research (Basch 1987; Krueger 1988; Lederman 1990), do not offer a woman centered research methodology. As a novice researcher, I acknowledged this consciously, and set about to design, implement, and evaluate a triangulated, woman centered, focus group methodology for my dissertation (Macdonald 1996). Reflections upon the design and effectiveness of this woman centered methodology form the central focus of this paper.

Focus group methodology

Educational researchers are encouraged to consider utilizing focus groups because of their many identified advantages. A focus group is defined as 'a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, nonthreatening environment. It is conducted with approximately seven to ten people by a skilled interviewer' (Krueger 1988, 18). Stewart and Shamdasani (1990, 15) suggest that focus groups are ideal for 'exploratory research where rather little is known about the phenomenon of interest'. Basch (1987) and Proctor II (1991) reinforce that focus groups are a cost-effective method of collecting qualitative data from a number of participants as they interact with each other. This methodology is both holistic and socially oriented (Morgan and Spanish 1984), enjoyable (Krueger 1988), and there is typically a high degree of face validity (Krueger 1988).

Researchers are cautioned that the success of a focus group depends largely upon the expertise of the focus group moderator (Basch 1987; Campbell 1990; Krueger 1988; Stewart and Shamdasani 1990; Templeton 1987), who is often the researcher (Morgan and Spanish 1984). Two limitations of concern are the difficulty of controlling the discussion (Morgan and Spanish 1984), and potential moderator bias due to unintended cues (Stewart and Shamdasani 1990). Use of an observer who can take notes and comment on non-verbal behaviour is encouraged (Campbell 1990).

The advantages to the researcher of utilizing a focus group methodology are well established but the literature remains silent about the diverse needs of women participants in focus groups. The advice to ensure that participants in focus groups are comfortable and enjoy the experience (Basch 1987; Fern 1982; Krueger 1988; Stewart and Shamdasani 1990) is designed to facilitate information gathering, not develop relationships among the focus group participants. Similarly, there is no indication that women, especially mothers, may find focus groups particularly appealing and/or that there is a transformative potential in participating in such a research design.

The most revealing indication of the lack of commitment and/or relationship established in the standard focus group design is the strong encouragement to the researcher to over-recruit due to typically high non-attendance rates among focus group participants (Fern 1982; Krueger 1988). The standard design consists of attendance at one focus group conducted by an unknown moderator. Researchers concerned about potential 'over-attendance' are urged to send extra participants away (Fern 1982, 12). There is no awareness that the lack of meaningful relationships could influence commitment to the study, the quality of the discussion, or the eventual validity of the study findings. Not only did I not wish to engage myself or my participants in such a disconnected process, but I sensed that the essence of my heuristic inquiry (Moustakas 1990) would not be revealed through a standard focus group methodology.

Creating a woman centered research methodology

The interpretation of 'women centered' builds upon Boulding's (1991) ideal of women reshaping community, locally and globally, thereby building a life supporting context for living. My intention was to design a balanced methodology, which included the many advantages of focus group discussions and contributed to women having a meaningful, engaged, and potentially transformative experience while participating in my study. This led me to reflect consciously upon women's developmental theory, women as learners, and the importance of maintaining congruence between my research topic and process. I explored additional qualitative methods of data

collection, such as personal interviews, which have been found effective when utilized with focus groups (Morgan and Spanish, 1984).

Women's identified developmental pattern and preferred learning styles contributed to my understanding of how to develop a woman centered research methodology. Gilligan (1982) contends that the basic moral development of women offers a complementary thread to male development and one that is needed in a caring society. Such an ethic of caring is based upon a commitment to nonviolence, to not hurting the other or the self. It is an ethic which emerges out of women's experience of relationship and responsibility to themselves, their family members, and to their community (Gilligan 1982; Noddings 1984). This challenged the standard focus group methodology advocated by market researchers; paradoxically, it also supported the holistic and social orientation of focus groups (Basch 1987; Krueger 1988; Morgan and Spanish, 1984). Women's expertise in forming meaningful relationships guided my design.

Issues of voice and silence have been identified as common themes in the feminist literature (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule 1986). Feeling silenced is a common theme even in women who have found their own voice and are anxious to share their understanding of life and participate in creating caring communities. I sensed that mothers who are nurses felt silenced in nursing, and that the opportunity to break this silence with each other, and through the dissemination of my findings, would be very attractive to potential participants. My experiential understanding of mothers reassured me that the mothers in my study would feel comfortable in sharing their experiences together and could benefit from listening to each other's stories. My decision to include personal interviews grew out of my concern that each woman would have an opportunity to share her personal story in depth in the study, thus ensuring that each woman's voice would be heard.

Mothers who are nurses are multiple role women who are at risk for burnout, identified as 'a wearing down and wearing out of energy. It is an exhaustion born of excessive demands which may be self-imposed or externally imposed' (Freudenberger 1985, 9-10). This suggested to me the need to design a research methodology which replenished the energy of these women in balance with the energy depletion which I knew participation in my study would involve. Maintaining congruence between my topic and process was essential. My women centered focus group methodology was sensitive to the preference of women to engage in meaningful relationships. All participants were recruited through some form of connection with me. Several of the participants were known to me personally, others were referred through friends, colleagues, and acquaintances. The triangulated methodology consisted of personal interviews in the participants' homes, two focus groups in the researcher's home, and follow-up telephone interviews. A final optional focus group was held two years later to review the preliminary research findings.

Exceptionally high attendance rates at the focus groups were anticipated; the methodology included a number of steps which were intended to connect the participants to the research process, and encourage a commitment to completing the data collection activities. These steps included the following: recruitment through personal connections, a clear outline of the commitment anticipated in the consent form, the requirement to sign and mail the consent form which would be a deliberate action to join the study, the investment in time and energy of the participant during the personal interview prior to the first focus group session, and the establishment of a trusting relationship with the researcher/moderator during the personal interviews.

Because of these steps, a decision was made to recruit a maximum of nine participants and trust that the attendance rates would be high during the focus groups. This would also avoid potential problems with over-attendance and would protect the integrity of the process. Turning away participants who had made a sincere commitment to the study would compromise the integrity of the process. All participants completed an in-depth personal interview prior to the focus groups and were advised that participants who missed the first focus group would not be eligible to attend subsequent focus groups. The resulting perfect attendance at the first focus group challenges the necessity to over-recruit when planning focus groups. It also confirms that creating a woman centered focus group methodology builds commitment to the research process through establishing meaningful relationships. Eight of the nine participants attended the second focus group and the ninth called to say she was unable to attend and arranged a time to conduct the interview questions by telephone. All participants participated in the telephone follow-up interview, conducted after the second focus group.

A research question, specifically designed to assess the effectiveness of this methodology from the women's perspective, guided the study. A constructionist analysis of this data is reported in the next section.

Patterns of sharing

In this pattern, the participants identify three predominant themes which marked their participation in the research study: contributing to research, to the researcher, and to nursing; enjoying themselves; and developing personal awareness. These three themes

emerged from the stories of the participants, shared during the personal interviews, focus group discussions, and telephone follow-up interviews. Overall, the participants found participating in the research study to be a re-energizing or renewing experience.

Contributing

Despite the significant demands participating in the study made on the nurse/mothers' time and energy, and the need to reflect and share openly and honestly about their personal and professional lives, all of the participants mentioned being pleased to have the opportunity to contribute to their profession of nursing, to the research process, and/or to the researcher. While this activity did deplete their energy, they gave their energy willingly and consciously. As Emmy stated in her personal interview, 'I'm pleased to be helping out.' Farida was pleased to contribute as well, 'because to me, I feel that, if I can give something, I'm willing.' Amy was pleased to be contributing to the research process, the researcher and nursing:

> Yes, I'm delighted to be part of this research...to help you, and because of our relationship I admire what your interests are and I think your choice is fascinating. I don't feel people have put time and effort into this and I think that it will have an impact.... We'll have different coping skills and sharing that in a group and finding out about other strategies and sharing that will be useful....We are contributing to nursing as a whole through you Jody, acting through you.

Hanna agreed and thought this would offer an opportunity to connect her experience with future generations, 'It would be something for future generations just to look at, to go by.'

Enjoying

Most of the participants indicated that they had enjoyed participating in the research study; overall it was a replenishing experience, despite the time and energy requirements. The many bouts of laughter in the group, noted in various quotes, were most enjoyable for everyone. As Ilsa commented, about being in the study, 'It was replenishing and I was glad to see [the observer].' Jenny also commented on enjoying the process, 'I really enjoyed it Jody and it was interesting to be part of it. The whole thing. I think you did it very, very well.' Farida shared, 'No changes to suggest, most enjoyable.'

Cara commented on enjoying the personal interview, 'I really liked the personal interview. It's hard to find someone to listen to you for two hours.' Beth enjoyed the well organized, focus group discussions, 'I think the discussions were excellent and far ranging. I think basically there was a lovely spontaneity.' Amy enjoyed, 'having the house to ourselves, the flowers, the food, and the other women,' and the intimacy, 'I've never really sat and talked about that in any depth before.'

Developing personal awareness

Through listening to each other's stories in the focus group discussions, the participants developed an empowering awareness of how their own lives were similar to or different from other women's lives. This was an affirming experience for the most part as Jenny suggests, 'I guess it normalizes an awful lot sort of within your life. To find that all people, from different areas within nursing, have the same sort of experiences.' Becoming aware that they had valued stories to share with the younger participants was an empowering yet bittersweet experience for the more experienced nurse/mothers. As Amy suggests:

> It was, felt, like a grandmother or somebody who had perhaps a little bit of wisdom to share and thought what a shame that we can't do this more frequently.... That was interesting and sad in a way that I had no one to do that with when I was younger.

As one of the younger women, Emmy appreciated the advice, encouragement and positive role modelling that she received from the experts in the group, 'It was a really nice group just to see how well everyone had done ...There's a light at the end of the tunnel.' That light for Emmy was likely hope, rekindled by the positive stories of the experts. It made her more aware of the potential opportunities in her own life.

Farida felt that attending the focus groups had developed her awareness about her life as a mother and nurse, 'I guess I am more aware of my role as a nurse and as a mother, to make it better.' She had gone on to share this awareness with colleagues at work.

Developing awareness is a potentially painful experience as Cara, a mother of six, noted during the telephone interview, 'It was the comment of the lady towards the end about that mother of six from Africa. I was furious. I did try to call you but I essentially just got a good sleep and got over it.' The telephone follow-up interviews were used by two participants to share frustrations arising from their participation in the focus groups.

Conclusion

This woman centered focus group methodology, which built upon the centrality of relationship in women's lives, created a strong commitment to the research study, rewarding experiences for the researcher and women participants, and a challenge to the norm of over-recruiting. It is recommended for

future adult education research studies investigating women's lived experience.

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Futures in the education of educators

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The broader context

In this paper I want to consider some current developments in the training and career experience of adult educators and make a case for proactive engagement in policy by those of us now working in the field. These developments are occurring on a number of different levels. Traditional boundaries within the education system as a whole are becoming blurred, not through any coherent policy of creating a 'seamless robe', but rather as a result of a number of ad hoc initiatives which may have the effect of producing a single, if rather misshapen, patchwork garment. Thus for example universities increasingly work together with further education colleges to offer 'off-campus' higher education and progression routes; lifelong education, for so long a concept familiar only to adult educators, is now espoused as policy by all the main political parties; much of what remains of traditional local education authority adult education is now delivered by colleges; an increasing proportion of students in both higher and further education are adults; and most recently, it has been suggested that colleges - and thus ultimately the universities to which they are affiliated - should consider enrolling fourteen-year olds (Utley 1996). The education of adults is becoming indiscernible as a distinct area of educational endeavour; in the process it is also inevitably losing the 'marginal difference' which some practitioners saw as its principal source of emancipatory potential (Steele 1991). Professional distinctiveness may be another casualty; 'educators of adults' might now refer to anyone working in further, higher, professional, continuing or numerous other branches of education.

Whilst these traditional boundaries are crumbling, there is increasing intervention in the day-to-day work of institutions through the various (and usually unrelated) prescriptive quality assessment and inspection frameworks established within each sector. This inevitably has an impact on educators' autonomy in that it influences both the content of educational provision and the management of institutions. Reductions in funding across post-compulsory education, combined with expansion of student numbers, further constrain the choices available to educators in their work. Within higher education, the end of the binary divide has also helped both to highlight the issue of the relative significance attached to teaching and research, and to problematise some traditional conceptions of 'being an adult educator'.

Current indications are that a change of government is probable in the near future, and that there is therefore some scope for policy modification. Although there is admittedly little prospect of major structural change in any sector of education, this does at least open up the possibility of meaningful consultation on the general direction and content of education policy, and consequently of educational work, of a kind which has been all but impossible in recent years.

Being an educator

What then has been the impact of recent developments on the day-to-day work of educators of adults? The effects are perhaps most clearly visible in further education, where many of the changes described above are further advanced than in other sectors, and where adults now constitute three-quarters of the student body (FEFC 1996). Thus for example tutors may find themselves working in contexts where classroom teaching is a comparative rarity; they may spend the majority of their time in workshop situations, or working with individuals within a group, all the members of which are at different stages of learning and assessment. The content of their teaching may be determined by an individualised and competence-based assessment framework which they have played no part in designing; they may have to assist students to make selections from packages of standardised and graded learning materials rather than produce their own materials. Those working in training organisations and 'realistic work environments' may experience these changes even more keenly, and may also be subject to production demands which conflict with educational activities (Bates & Dutson 1995).

Within higher education, the main effects of expansion in terms of tutors' work have been an increase in class sizes and a consequent loss of contact with individual students. Modularisation, a handmaiden of expansion, has brought a further administrative load and has introduced an inevitable degree of alienation between tutors and their ever-changing students. In all sectors the number of prescribed activities and the bureaucracy associated with assessment and quality assurance have burgeoned to the point where they can occupy a significant proportion of the working week. Thus the individualisation and standardisation of learning, the size of the student body, and the demands of both institutional and external administration have effected a radical and frequently unwelcome change in what educators actually spend their time doing (Kavanagh *et al*, 1996). This in turn raises a number of questions

about what claims, if any, they can realistically make to any emancipatory social purpose in their work, and has implications for the kinds of education and training which they need to enable them to function both effectively and ethically in the new educational environment.

Professional training

In recent years there have been moves in a number of different professional fields to modify, and in some cases transform, the training undergone by entrants to the profession. Education outside schools, for which mandatory professional training has never been established, has in some ways jumped a stage in its development as a professional activity. It is proceeding rather hastily from a situation where training and education of various kinds were available on a relatively casual and haphazard basis, to a scenario in which newly-developed qualifications may become to all intents and purposes a prerequisite for practice. This is evident in the recent exercise *Mapping the FE Sector* (DfEE/FEDA, 1995) which provides an occupational and functional map of the type normally used as the basis for vocational qualifications. The exercise followed lengthy speculation about the possibility of establishing an Education Lead Body, and was rapidly followed by the initiation of a similar exercise in relation to higher education (THES 1996). At the same time a competence profile has been introduced in schoolteacher training (see, for example, Malcolm 1995) and the DfEE has announced plans to establish a higher-level vocational qualification for headteachers. The general drift of policy, if it can be given so precise a label, is towards a national system of teaching qualifications which may well be sector-specific, but which will focus on one or more models of teaching competence.

Some other professions, by contrast, are moving away from a skills-based training model towards one which emphasises knowledge, understanding, reflection and critical thinking. The obvious examples are nursing and other professions allied to medicine, where training has now been upgraded to degree level, and where the more menial tasks traditionally associated with the occupations are being delegated to vocationally-qualified technicians or assistants. This is linked with the question of European harmonisation, which has in some cases prompted a reconsideration of training routes to ensure that reciprocal recognition can be obtained by practitioners across the EU.

Movements in professional education for educators thus appear to be going in the opposite direction to those occurring in other forms of professional preparation. The reasons for this are complex; whilst to some extent the changes are clearly a product of the paradoxical triumph of the NCVQ model within education in particular, I would suggest they are also attributable in part to the reluctance of post-compulsory educators to see themselves as a group with common professional concerns and engaged in common activities - inhabitants of the same unfenced moorland, to borrow an appealing metaphor (Edwards and Usher 1995). To pursue the metaphor a little further, the introspection and clannishness of the moor-dwellers may have left the way open for others to erect their own arbitrary boundaries and introduce crossing points or even passports, developments which will not necessarily be conducive to the greater educational good.

The models of competence adopted in this new generation of teaching qualifications may not be as rigid as that adopted by NCVQ and so roundly criticised over the years by SCUTREA members and others; however it seems likely that they will share some of its basic characteristics. I do not propose here to repeat or add to the general arguments about the 'competence colossus' (Bates 1995, 63) but to consider instead the implications of these developments for the training and development of educators of adults.

Futures and how to deal with them

There is something rather unnerving about trying to imagine the working lives of future educators; it is difficult to avoid sinking into dystopian fantasy. They are currently growing up, computer-literate in a world of 'flexible employment', processed through the various key stages of the National Curriculum, perhaps moving on to 'impoverished and authoritarian forms of learning which make no attempt at all to incorporate breadth, critical analysis and challenge' (Ecclestone 1995, 131), warned repeatedly that education is their main insurance against a life of poverty and unemployment and worse still, that they will have to keep it up throughout their lives in order to survive at all. Such experiences are likely to form a stony and infertile soil for liberal or radical ideas about the purposes and potential of education, although they may render these future educators less troublesome, both as employees and as citizens, than some of their predecessors. However it is vital that opportunities exist for them to be exposed to and analyse these ideas, if education is not to be a mechanistic, sterile and ultimately oppressive experience for the majority of both tutors and students.

This suggests to me that the preservation of space for ideas, analysis and commitment in the training and development of educators is of crucial importance, and yet this is precisely what is squeezed out when the balance of training shifts too heavily towards skills, competences and workplace practice. The FE

mapping exercise includes a rather tortured paragraph about 'values' which demonstrates how the emancipatory commitment of educators can be adapted to fit the skill requirements of a new training system:

> A draft statement of principles and commitments was initially produced through analysing ... the mission statements and commitments of FE corporations and the values expressed in community education [...] this could allow those scrutinising the functional map to evaluate whether the map accurately reflects the spectrum of work roles. A statement of values can help those developing the map further to audit whether these values are portrayed in the detail. (DfEE/FEDA 1995, 22)

Who needs dystopian fantasy when you can have a ready-made statement of professional values to help you audit your role map? Yet we have little to offer in response to such pernicious banalities, of which we can doubtless expect more when the higher education mapping exercise is finished. Ecclestone's call for 'policy scholarship' (Ecclestone, 1995) as a means of resistance to this type of encroachment on the intellectual independence and professional commitment of educators is timely and warrants serious consideration. Similarly Bates' invitation to researchers to 'explore the difficulties in arriving at consensus over common standards in the context of professional dissensus' (Bates 1995, 64) is one that needs to be accepted before contentious 'standards' are externally imposed on the profession as a whole. It is precisely because there is no standard route into the teaching of adults that we have been able to develop the diversity of approaches which currently characterises training and development for educators; and it is for the same reason that we are not as prepared as we might be for the questions raised by the proposed creation of a monolithic qualifications structure. SCUTREA's recent initiatives in the area of professional ethics demonstrate an awareness of the problems, but also show how very difficult it is to accommodate diversity within simple codes.

There has of course been a discussion, for as long as I have been involved in education, about emancipatory practice, reflective practice and so on - in short about the content of professional development. My point here is that the focus of these discussions has been principally on conceptual critique and small-scale practical application, rather than on policy-building. This is fine when we are left to our own alternative or oppositional devices, safe in the knowledge that no-one is sufficiently interested in or threatened by our activities to interfere. It becomes problematic when, as in this instance, what has been a fragmented and amorphous field of practice crystallises into an object of national policy intervention. However the particular political context in which this is occurring may provide a unique opportunity for those engaged in the education of educators to participate in the construction of that policy - unique at least to those of us who have spent the majority of our professional lives being systematically excluded from national policy debate.

Millar, referring to the construction of the new South Africa, demonstrated the importance of educators preparing themselves for a proactive policy role, and seizing opportunities as they arise or are thrust upon them (Millar 1993). Whilst not wishing to romanticise or overstate the possibilities presented by the current context, I would suggest that this is precisely what is needed in terms of intervention in the process of creating a qualifications structure for educators of adults - and indeed in other areas of education policy. We have to some extent given up expecting to be listened to by policy makers, and perhaps even given up imagining how we might develop the system if anyone cared what we thought. The prospect that arises now is not that educators will be actively invited to shape developments - this seems highly unlikely - but that in the turmoil and uncertainty of a new political departure, opportunities are created for debate and participation which may have a profound influence on future policy.

We as educators should be ready to participate in this process with 'intellectual work incisive enough both to contribute moral and intellectual grounding for [professional] practice and, even more urgently, to impact the construction of national policy' (Millar 1993, 150), not for our own benefit - it's too late for that - but for that of our successors, and more importantly their students.

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A future for professional learning

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This paper explores, through the utilisation of biographical methods, the processes of professional learning from the perspectives of the adult student and the adult educator. Our research represents aspects of our own professional learning journey and is rooted in our own autobiographies from which a number of themes are drawn. We believe that our work is testimony to Oakley's (1979, 4) assertion that, 'Academic research projects bear an intimate relationship with the researcher's life'.

For Margaret, the opportunity arose to study the professional learning experience of a group of adult students undertaking a work based learning module as part of their BSc(Hons) Nursing. This module entitled *Learning Through Professional Practice* (LTPP) had as its foci learning how to learn and the development of personal and professional knowledge through the world of work (Millar 1992). It is based on the premise that professional knowledge is developed by making learning and understanding explicit through critical reflection of experience, the process of which incorporates thinking, doing, feeling and knowledge creation. The module aims to provide an educational opportunity for practitioners to participate in the process of self-directed learning. This is to enable them to attend to their own future learning needs when faced with new and unanticipated problems and in the development of their professional judgement. These assumptions of the module are based on the argument that knowledge gained by learning through professional practice enables practitioners to extend their range of competence (Eraut 1990; Fish & Purr 1991). My motivation to do the project comes from wanting to know what and how learning brings about a change in performance and how nurse education can contribute effectively to the development of this professional knowledge.

A biographical approach was taken, since undertaking the LTPP module was perceived as part of the student's life history within an educational context. All twelve students who had taken the module in the second semester of 1993/94 were invited to take part one year on. They were all nurses in the final year of a part-time post registration undergraduate degree in nursing for which this is a core module. After much deliberation and encouraged by Plummer (1994, 94), who points out that before the advent of audio tape participants wrote down their own story, I used a 'directive' for data collection. This asks for a written response to an open ended set of questions and has the advantage of allowing the participant to write what they wish without being interrupted by the researcher/interviewer (Mann 1994). The six responses to the directive were treated as a form of story and more specifically as learning life stories temporally located within the lives of the six participants as well as my own (Stuart 1993). The aim of the analysis was to interpret and make sense of the students' experiences of the module within the context of professional development. The significant categories of 'sense of self', 'learning how to learn' and 'professional knowledge' were formed and a sequence of events was postulated as to how processes involved in reflective learning might facilitate movement from the competent to proficient to expert level of practice (Benner 1984; Millar 1995). The categories 'sense of self' and 'learning how to learn' are now explored with respect to professional learning and contextualised within the work of Mezirow (1981).

'Sense of self' came through in several of the sections of the directive and for P5 this happened through answering the directive:

> In answering this directive it has influenced my understanding of LTPP by raising my awareness of my personal and professional growth through reflection,

indicating discriminant reflectivity through assessment of the efficacy of her perceived personal and professional growth. Judgmental reflectivity was an outcome for P4:

> During the LTPP module I learned about myself regards to personality traits that affect the way I learn and act and some of my strengths and weaknesses.

P3 expressed sense of self in a variety of interconnected ways with reflectivity leading to affective reflectivity:

> I had never self-assessed before. It was strange, but I suppose you could say that I felt empowered without being imposed on.

Through reflective activities self awareness has been developed:

> My awareness was heightened in the module and has continued to be at a level that is higher than the pre-module period.

But there was more to it than that for P3:

> The module to be honest, gave me the opportunity for the first time in my life to be a free spirit.

> The learning contract was a way of finding out what I wanted to know and NOT what they wanted me to know. Self-criticism and self evaluation assisted the development of self-reliance, independence and creativity.

Self reference is taken as a legitimate base from which to learn. Barnett (1994) has addressed the limits of both academic and vocational competence (to which all the participants have been exposed) concluding that these forms of education lead to states of becoming outside the individual. By using a process of becoming through fulfilling internal demands, the outcomes, meaningful in terms of self, self reliance, independence and creativity have been enhanced for P3.

The responses of P3, P4 and P5 took the form of subjective writings to various degrees; that is, they took the self explicitly as a starting point while the writings of P6 appeared more as professional reportage (Sheridan 1993). Unlike P3, there has been an inability to step outside previous educational experiences of external forms of knowing (Barnett 1994). Usher (1993) uses the metaphor of reading for understanding of experience. To read is to interpret, to give meaning and this is influenced by pre-understandings. If the 'book' 'presents such a radical challenge to my pre-understandings that my personal stability is undermined to an unacceptable degree' (Usher 1993:171) then the 'book' is rejected. The development of self reference is unlikely to happen and writings of personal meaning remain objective.

The significance of 'learning how to learn' was expressed in a variety of ways and for some brought about critical consciousness:

> ...I had not spent time THINKING about my learning processes...but that point I am trying to make is that I began to conciously (sic) think about the process of acquiring knowledge... (P2)

For P5 it was meaning making as discriminant and theoretical reflectivity:

> ...I am able to make more sense of challenging clinical situations...

> 'The connection between my learning on the module and my practice is simply through learning to understand the meaning of my experiences in practice...'

The self directed nature of the process of learning connected strongly to P3's sense of self:

> I suppose significant learning can only take place when the student perceives the matter to be relevant to his/her own purpose and is allowed to participate responsibly in the learning process. The contract allowed me to have a degree of autonomy. I had a sense of ownership of the learning and the objectives to be pursued.

It is through utilising effective learning processes for the individual that the students taking the module have come to understand themselves.

The research into the ways in which adult educators construct/view their professional identities and the potential implications for professional and student learning has developed from work carried out using my (Sue's) learning life history whilst attending a course at the University of Sussex. The process enabled me to identify some of the baggage I brought to my role as an adult educator and particularly to address the question as to why, since being awarded my PhD, I experience feelings of fear that I am about to be exposed as an imposter in the academic world. These feelings are most acute when teaching, particularly at postraduate level and when writing for an academic audience. This is related to my belief that in order to be credible, I must demonstrate that I have some expert knowledge, that I have read the books and acquainted myself with the latest research. If my ideas cannot be contextualised within the existing literature then they have no place in the academic arena. For me, notions of the 'expert' and the 'fraud' co-exist as aspects of my professional self and have acted as drivers to working hard to bridge the gaps in my own learning. I felt isolated with these feelings, assuming that this was 'just me' until I stumbled upon a concept which has proved to be a 'critical incident' (Kelchtermans,1993) in my professional learning. The Imposter Phenomenon is a psychological syndrome or pattern and was the term developed by Clance and Imes to denote an 'internal experience of intellectual phoniness' which they found to be prevalent amongst,

> ...over one hundred and fifty women who have earned PhDs in various specialities, who are respected professionals in their fields or who are students recognised for their academic achievements. However,... these women do not experience an internal sense of success. They consider themselves to be "imposters". (1978, 241)

Arena and Page (1992) in their study of the Imposter Phenomenon amongst Clinical Nurse Specialists, suggest that Imposters fear being regarded as unintelligent or being put on the spot to defend their ideas and consequently they work hard to prevent such a discovery. I began to feel that maybe I wasn't alone; however, all the research and literature came from the

USA; indeed the material had been very difficult to access so perhaps it wasn't an issue for UK academics. In addition, it seemed from the research to have been designated a 'women's problem' and explanations linked to 'women's fear of success' (Harvey and Katz 1985, 181). I decided that this issue merited further exploration particularly given its potential to act as an inhibitor to career development and professional learning. Harvey and Katz (1985) suggest that imposter feelings rise in a new situation and therefore one way of alleviating anxiety is to stay with what is familiar. Even if an individual overcomes the feeling of being a fake they may find it reappearing when they take the next step in their academic or professional career.

The Imposter Phenomenon constituted one of the issues I wished to explore with my respondents (six), five of whom were teaching on a range of undergraduate and postgraduate professional courses. The interviews explored educational experiences, career development, feelings regarding their current roles and responsibilities and perceptions of professional identities. Underpinning the research is the notion that:

> The ways in which teachers achieve, maintain and develop their sense of self in and through a career are of vital significance in understanding the actions and commitments of teachers in their work. (Ball and Goodson 1985, 18)

An emergent theme from the interviews was the need to feel credible and to feel that one had expert knowledge to offer to students. All of them said that at times they felt like a fraud, particularly when required to teach an area where they didn't feel they had the expertise. As one of my respondents said:

> At high level you cannot bluff. However much I worked, if I didn't know a subject , I didn't know it...Sometimes I go in and I feel as if I'm going to have my head chopped off...I think I can't do this, I don't know this...it isn't a healthy existence, you get very stressed. (R1)

It is inevitable perhaps that at times we will find ourselves required to teach areas in which we don't feel we have expert knowledge and if in our training we have internalised such statements as, 'The adult educator needs to be **fully acquainted with all aspects of the subject** for unlike the university lecturer we cannot always choose what we teach about...'(Rogers 1986,129, our emphasis) then it is not surprising that Imposter feelings emerge. This raises the question of how we manage situations in the classroom where we don't feel 'fully aquainted' with the subject. Do we construct the teaching and learning activities to enable us to stay on ground we feel safe with? Do we utilise teaching methods which will enable us to have control, which will help us to minimise the chances of being 'exposed as frauds' by our students? What implications do these issues have for student learning? These questions were discussed in the interviews and a variety of strategies were mentioned including the importance of the relationship between the adult educator and the group; a good rapport made it easier to say 'I don't know', but one of the respondents made the comment that:

> I don't know if students always do accept that we may not be experts.(R4)

One strategy in particular, however, seemed to suggest a way forward for professional learning and has links with Harvey and Katz' (1985, 205) notion of 'throwing away the mask'. This strategy relates to being open and honest, to giving up the pretence and was most clearly exemplified by one of the respondents who said:

> I can't be an expert in every field so if I'm lecturing in an area where I know I'm not an expert...it's the first thing I admit...I feel so much safer...I've set the scene so I don't have to pretend any more...It has really freed me...even if I do a bad lecture, I feel well, I've done what I can but if I pretend to be that expert and I fall flat on my face, it's mortifying when you do that. (R1)

R1 went on to reflect that this strategy opened up the possibility that she could feel comfortable asking questions of her students:

> ...by acknowledging that I'm not an expert means that we can have this more two-way process and I can learn from it...What I often say to students is a lot of what I know has been taught to me by you anyway ...

The notion of professional learning as a reciprocal process was a key theme which emerged from the data, for example:

> With the students I get and knowing they are expert in their own way in their professional areas, I suppose I would see it more as a partnership. When you get them to draw on their professional knowledge we are all collaborating in the session. (R4)

Like co-operative inquiry (Reason 1988) collaborative learning is an emergent process which requires to be negotiated between student and adult educator. By listening to each other, sharing expectations and exploring barriers to learning within the group, a shared language and conceptual framework can be developed creating a shared common space (Miller 1994). The reality of

collaborative learning is thus dependent on the goodwill and efforts of the students and adult educator. Within the shared common space, the opportunity arises for both students and adult educator to become themselves, knowing their own position and being able to defend it in open dialogue. In the words of Barnett (1994, 193) professional learning is 'an education for collective self-transcendence'.

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Like an elephant on the high wire: songs of adult educators

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The social, political, economic and institutional contexts in which adult educators work have changed significantly in the last fifteen years. Adults now participate more fully in a diverse range of learning opportunities and many more educational practitioners now encounter adults as learners. The environment of lifelong learning is increasingly characterised by diversity and change, and one result is a sense of confusion about what constitutes adult education and what it means to be an adult educator. A clearly defined and secure future for adult educators may be an elusive goal.

Our aim in this paper is to investigate the metaphors and labels which adult educators use in order to characterise their identities and practices, and to examine the ways in which they employ image, narrative and anecdote to construct and reflect on their personal and professional selves. To this end we shall draw on our previous work on tribal groupings, professional networks, invisible colleges and sub-cultures among adult educators (Miller 1994a and 1994b, Edwards and Usher 1994 and 1996, Edwards and Miller 1996). In addition we include data collected from practitioners of adult education in a workshop held during the course of the 1995 SCUTREA conference. It was from this workshop that the image of the elephant on the high wire emerged: this image carries distant echoes of Bird on the Wire, a song by 'sixties icon Leonard Cohen, whose songs and stories were part of the formative experiences of at least some in the constituency with which we are concerned.

This paper is therefore part of an iterative process for those who participated in the workshop last year. Our intention is to reflect back some of the metaphors and images through which participants' identities were constructed; we are not, of course, suggesting a definitive or 'true' reading of the metaphors generated in the course of the workshop. We view the process in which we are engaged as one of discursive location and dislocation in which we indicate meanings within which those who participated may situate themselves or which they may contest. Drawing on contemporary developments in post-structuralist and postmodern analysis, we are suggesting not only that are there diverse futures for the identities of adult educators, but also that new theoretical perspectives may emerge which will inform the inscription of meaning in practice.

Theoretical concerns

Three inter-related sets of theoretical concerns form the background for this paper. The first of these is the contemporary interest in questions of identity and self-identity. In *Modernity and self-identity* (1991), Anthony Giddens suggests that the uncertainties of contemporary life and the wide range of options available to people produce a situation in which 'the self becomes a reflexive project' (Giddens 1991, 32) in the context of a condition of existential anxiety. Attempts to overcome such anxiety through a choice of lifestyles never succeed entirely, with the result that identity becomes insecure, complex, multifaceted and uncertain. The notion of the stable, unified self may remain as a normative goal, but it is never to be achieved.

The second theoretical strand stems from the interest in neo-tribalism in contemporary social formations, which concerns itself with the shared sentiment, collective bonds and customs through which groups constitute themselves. In contrast to classical tribalism, which shaped all aspects of the individual's existence, 'neo-tribalism is characterised by fluidity, occasional gatherings and dispersal' (Maffesoli 1996, 76). Accordingly, people belong to many and various tribes within which they play diverse roles as expressions of their sociality. Within this perspective, adult education becomes a territory in which to investigate heterogeneous and transient tribal groupings.

The third strand originates in the interest in autobiography and life history as methods and foci of research (see for example Freeman 1993, Miller 1993, Swindells 1995). The stories people tell about their lives and the ways in which their narratives are constructed constitute an important concern for many adult educators and social scientists. In telling one's story the self is brought into being through discursive practices defining and delimiting the world and rendering it meaningful. Artefacts, stories, narratives and even songs are metaphors or 'mediators and filters through which we not only live our lives with others in our environment but understand and symbolise that life and ourselves' (Adam 1994, 157). Contemporary work on autobiography amongst adult educators provides powerful insights into the construction of

identities and the wide variety of groups to which subjects see themselves as belonging.

Metaphors of adult educators

In the literature on adult education, the identities of practitioners are described and constructed in a multiplicity of ways. For example, Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) distinguish between five 'tribes' of adult education; members of these groups are characterised as traditionalists, self-actualisers, progressives, guerillas or organisational maintainers. Each tribe is identified as having its own distinct values, concerns and pedagogic styles. While presented as a classificatory typology, this approach can also be read as a set of stories about adult educators as members of tribes; the specific stories act as a means of defining worlds, influencing practice and shaping identity. This typology suggests a firm set of boundaries, more closely aligned to the classical conception of tribes, in contrast with Maffesoli's notion of tribes as fluid and changing.

In his discussion of metaphors as shorthand encapsulations of reality, Brookfield (1993, 75) uses the examples of 'midwives', 'gatekeepers' and 'enablers' as ways of framing adult education practices. Specific identities are adopted according to the perceived roles of the practitioners. Thus while there may be different metaphors of the identity of adult educators, difference is largely seen to play out between individuals rather than within individuals. Brookfield therefore suggests a grounded and bounded concept of identity.

More recently, in the context of debates within cultural studies, feminism and postmodernism, Giroux (1992) has argued that educators need to re-position themselves as cultural workers with an identity expressed in the metaphor of border-crossers. According to this analysis, adult educators' identities are multiple and shifting, reflecting the complexity of the worlds within and between which they operate. Singular or tribal metaphors of identity lose their power to give meaning in relation to this complexity.

While the literature provides a rich resource of metaphors for adult educators, many writers seem to conceive practitioners' identities as fixed and singular rather than open and multiple. We now move on to a consideration of metaphors adopted in the constituency of adult educators represented by SCUTREA in order to ascertain how members of this group define and construct themselves and the extent to which their identities may be represented by unitary labels or images.

An action research workshop on metaphor and identity

We decided to explore adult educators' metaphors and identities in the context of an action research workshop at the 1995 SCUTREA conference. The workshop consisted of a number of activities.

1. Participants were asked to respond to a number of true-or-false statements, such as whether or not they had read Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1972), whether or not they had an e-mail address, and whether or not they had laptop computers, mobile telephones or at least one pair of Dr Martens shoes;
2. Participants were asked to group themselves on the basis of (a) the decade when they first identified themselves as adult educators, (b) the first location - for example, adult, further or higher education - in which they identified themselves in this way, and (c) their current locations as adult educators;
3. Participants were asked to brainstorm a list of labels by which they would identify themselves as adult educators;
4. Participants were asked to group themselves around the label or labels which they felt they would apply to themselves as adult educators;
5. The groups which formed were asked to construct posters which expressed the identities they had ascribed to themselves and through which they would attempt to attract other adult educators. Participants were provided with a range of materials to use in the construction of their posters, including photographic images of adult educators drawn from magazines and promotional material;
6. The groups were asked to introduce their posters as images of their identity as adult educators;
7. Participants were asked to reflect on questions of identity raised by and in the workshop.
8. The workshop discussion was recorded on audio tape and the activities were photographed throughout.

Metaphors and images of self-identity

Figure 1 summarises both the range of metaphors generated by workshop participants during the brainstorming exercise and the ways in which these were grouped by participants to construct an identity for their group. The extensive range of metaphors produced by participants is striking, although it is noticeable that labels associated with the academic disciplines of adult education, such as sociologist, psychologist or historian, were not among them. This suggests that notions of disciplinary and disciplined identities in adult education are not currently strong.

There is greater diversity both in the range of metaphors adopted and the differing combinations of those metaphors among the groups. Each group felt the need to assemble a wide range of metaphors in order to represent its members' self-identities. This suggests that the concept of a single bounded tribal metaphor for adult educators is inadequate, and needs to be recast in the more complex and multifaceted terms suggested in the notion of neo-tribalism. It seems, then, that adult educators need to be able to construct themselves not as a uniform community but as a community of differences, inclusive rather than exclusive.

Figure 1: Multiple identities of adult educators

Group		Group
A Teacher	B	Translator
Researcher		Innovator
Fund-raiser		Pirate
Emotional Prop/Wreck		Champion
Fixer		Campaigner
Bridge-builder		
Subversive		
Co-ordinator		
C Learner	D	Ear
Co-ordinator		Friendly face of feminism
Researcher		Peer supporter
Counsellor		Conduit
Bridge-builder		Risk-taker
Demystifyer		
Community Resource		
Gambler		
Subversive		
Facilitator		
Teacher		
E Trainer	F	Learner
Innovator		Researcher
Facilitator		Innovator
Learner		Facilitator

In an earlier paper (Edwards and Miller 1996), we suggested that metaphors such as the ones above might be placed in a range of differing types of discourse, which we characterise as instrumental, aspirational and affective.

Each of the six groups formed during the workshop drew upon a range of metaphors rather than agreeing upon a single label. The heterogeneity between groups was also to be found within groups, indicating the multiplicity of identities within the notion of the adult educator. We can examine this by focusing on the image produced by Group D as a poster to represent their identity.

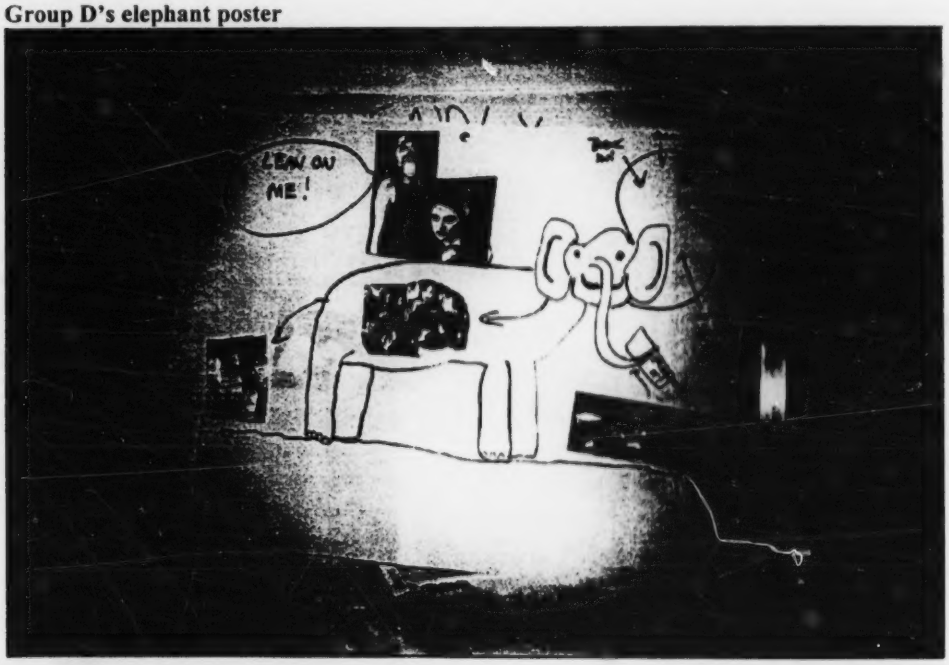
The elephant on the high wire

Central to Group D's image is a drawing of an elephant walking on a high wire. This is a dangerous and unpredictable task, which clearly indicates risk-taking to be central to this group's sense of itself. The large ears of the elephant facilitate the listening role of adult educators. A ladder to the high wire and pictures of groups of adults at the top of the ladder, in the stomach of the elephant and at its rear indicate the notion of a conduit and the change which participation in adult education can bring about. The playful scatology of this image of adult education as a digestive process suggests ambiguity as to who benefits from participation. The metaphor of peer supporter appears to be represented in the picture of two women placed on the elephant's back, one of whom is asking the other to 'lean on me' - also a line from a song, this time by Bill Withers. It may also be that in giving such prominence to this image, the group

are expressing its 'friendly face of feminism' metaphor, although this is not explicit. The image as a whole, with its central use of an elephant, has connotations of an animal with diverse and ill-fitting constituent elements, conceivably designed by a committee.

For members of Group D the task of putting the image together concretised certain aspects of the identity they adopted. Drawing the elephant involved the person concerned in reconceptualising herself as 'an artist'. Risk-taking was involved in this enterprise, but there was also a lot of fun and laughter. There is a tension here, as risk-taking is often constructed as a 'serious' business, rather than being associated with enjoyment. One member of the group remarked on the difficulty of trying to convey an adequate image of adult education and of trying to fashion something new while having to borrow images from elsewhere. This observation aptly illustrates the inter-textuality and cultural locatedness of self-identity, image and metaphor. There are no entirely new songs.

Group D's elephant poster



Diversity and development in SCUTREA

Two aspects of diversity and development in the constituency represented by SCUTREA are worth mentioning in addition; these are the move away from affiliations of subject or discipline amongst members, and the move towards greater gender balance in the organisation.

Our observations from the 1995 workshop reflect a professional world which contrasts strongly with that which existed at the time when many current practitioners (including some of those who took part in the workshop) entered the field. Much of SCUTREA's activity in the 1970s and early 1980s was carried out in the context of discipline-based interest groups such as those groups which dealt with the sociology, psychology and history of adult education respectively. In 1995, as we have noted, no-one present identified primarily as sociologist, psychologist or historian. A further contrast with the past is to be found in the use of the label 'friendly face of feminism' by a group which was made up of four women and three men. As Zukas (1994) points out, women were scarcely present and largely invisible in early SCUTREA gatherings; as late as 1982, SCUTREA was seen by those women who attended its conferences as a male-dominated, patriarchal organisation. The photographs taken in the 1995 workshop depict a population that is at least as diverse as the adult education community at large.

Conclusion

From the explorations reported in this paper, it seems that the changes and uncertainties faced by adult educators are reflected in the range of metaphors and images which participants in the 1995 workshop used to describe themselves. Uncertainty is further illustrated by the fact that no single metaphor or image arose which adequately embraced their sense of identity. With the proliferation and diversification of

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forms of adult education and with confusion as to its direction, the roles, values and feelings expressed in adult educators' metaphors and images of self-identity are themselves increasingly ambiguous. Attempts to place boundaries around the field of adult education and the identity of the adult educator therefore appear increasingly misplaced. The future is unclear, and there may be a greater diversity which carries a sense of loss as well as of possibility. Leonard Cohen's plaintive lyric, 'I have tried in my way to be free', seems somehow appropriate.

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Transformation, multiculturalism, and community

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This case study reports how a group of thirteen doctoral students engaged racial diversity as the central tenet of our discourse over the period of thirty months in which we studied processes of transformative change in human systems. Our case analysis is created through a process of collaborative inquiry (Group for Collaborative Inquiry and thINQ 1994; Kasl 1995; Reason 1994) and hermeneutic interpretation (Bray 1995; thINQ 1994) in which all of us participated. Our narrative captures themes that describe our experience of the relationship between multiculturalism and transformative learning in the context of learning community.

We are the MIX, the Multicultural Inquiry eXchange.[1] Our group is the second residential doctoral cohort in a new school that has been developed by a small institute for graduate studies in the United States. We chose a name for our group as a symbol that expresses one of the expectations in our graduate program: that in addition to learning as individuals, we are expected to form a community that itself becomes a learning system. Our curriculum and our faculty's ways of work emphasize collaboration and the expectation that we learn about the transformation of human systems, in part, from our experience as a human system. The name that we created, the MIX, reflects the content of our learning system's inquiry.

To understand the relationship between transformative learning and multiculturalism it is important to define these two terms. Transformative learning is a process through which meaning perspectives (Mezirow 1991) are changed. The process involves identifying and challenging hidden assumptions. Being part of a multicultural group gives individuals access to diverse cultural perspectives, providing a context that surfaces hidden assumptions and presumptions.

In the United States, the term multiculturalism has permeated the public discourse. The difficulty is that there is no common understanding of what this term means. David Lionel Smith (1993) warns us of the hazards associated with vague definitions of multiculturalism: 'The word multiculturalism purveys something for everybody. Universal and specific, inclusive and exclusive, democratic and despotic, sublime and ridiculous, empirically real and theoretical, multiculturalism embraces everything and precludes nothing.' If the word multiculturalism is bandied about without a well thought through working definition, it runs the risk of reinforcing the melting pot mentality. The melting pot metaphor suggests that the diverse people who have settled in the United States have melted into one type of person, an American. This mentality is undesirable for a number of reasons, one being that it makes marginalization invisible. The difficulties with defining multiculturalism experienced in our larger society were reenacted in the MIX.

As a group we never reached consensus on our definition of multiculturalism. In practice, however, we did focus on issues of race in our multicultural experience. We define race as a social construction that, as it exists in the United States, functions as an index for institutional power and access.

Our creation story

Our inquiry is grounded in our creation story. We began our work in 1993 with a week-long residency We were a cohort of nine students - eight white and one African-American. Through a process of tumultuous and searing internal debate, the original members of this learning community agreed to challenge the school to acknowledge that its goal for the group could not be accomplished. The students could not learn effectively from their own experience as a human system when that system was so impoverished in its representation of the diversity in the larger culture of the United States. The school supported this analysis by providing recruitment scholarships and accelerated admissions procedures.

Thanks to an incredible organizing effort to which almost every member contributed, the MIX was able to attract three African American women, two African American men, a Latina, a Latino, and a Chinese American woman - eight new people of colour in all. Since that time, although we lost four students during the first year of our programme, whites have been in a minority in the MIX. At the end of our core curriculum, we are six white students and seven students of colour.

A process of transition

The following pieces were written by members of the cohort at various times during our thirty months together. They illustrate transformations of self identity within relationships based on race. To begin, Michael Pinto's and Victor's narratives exemplify our

[1] The MIX is a cohort of Ph.D. students who choose to use a group name to symbolize the fact that the knowledge described in this paper has been constructed by the full group over a period of several years. Individual members are: Michael Bell, Shakti Butler, Victor Lewis, Meili, Ken Otter, Suzanne Pereira, Michael Pinto, Yolanda Ronquillo, Linda Sartor, Mat Schwarzman, Eileen Sullivan, Jean Gilbert Tucker, and Joanna Zweig.

first deconstruction around notions of multiculturalism.

Michael writes:

> Shortly after our cohort convened in August of 1993, Victor voiced concern about being the only person of colour in the group. Though I heard his words and certainly felt some of his emotions, my overriding feeling was 'Let's not get into that.' It was like, 'That's your problem Victor, not mine, so don't drag me into this thing. I'm here for my own reasons and racialization of issues is not one of them.'
>
> What I have experienced over these two plus years is a dance between the two of us. I have come to understand that I must reach out to people of colour if I want them to be in my life, and that I must be proactive in confronting racism. At the same time, I have learned to better understand my own ideas and beliefs and to explain them more clearly to people who might otherwise disagree with them.

Victor writes:

> When I first met Michael Pinto and learned that he lived in Laguna Beach, I immediately developed a chasm of mistrust. He seemed to me to be a neat and idealistic man, with enough power and naiveté to be dangerous to people like me, whom I reckoned he thought he understood. His ignorance was not going to be my bliss.
>
> Over the course of this first six-day meeting with Michael, my impressions of him became considerably more complex. As I learned that he had taught high school in Watts for many years, I assumed that he might have a body of experience that could be a bridge between us. I was suspicious though, of his motives for teaching in the black community, and about the unconscious racism that he may have brought into that context.
>
> Now that more than two years have passed since Michael and I first met, I have discovered that gradually a remarkable thing began to happen for me: I began to develop a description of Michael that was thicker. My view of him became less and less stereotyped and more and more attuned to the particulars of Michael as a person. I found myself less concerned with the differences between the ideologies that I embrace, and the ones that move Michael. I became more interested in the bridges between our respective values, and the prospects of our working in coalition around issues that speak to each of our hearts in compatible ways. I find that the frequency with which I heard Michael say and/or do what I might have said/done myself seemed to increase as the year went on, and the second year wound its course.

These two men began by seeing each other merely as categories and significantly expanded their ability to see one another as persons. Not only were they able to engage a new meaning scheme for each other that is less dependent on stereotyping about race, but they were sometimes able to see situations from each other's perspective. This represents, in our view, a paradigmatic example of Mezirow's goals for transformative adult education, namely, the enhancement of meaning perspectives which are more inclusive, discriminating, permeable and integrative of experience.

Above was a glimpse of the shift that occurred for two individuals in their perceptions of each other from stereotypes to individuals. Michael Bell, an African-American, points out that this shift was not unique to Victor and Michael Pinto:

> Important transformations have taken place which allow us to dialogue in a manner that would have been impossible at the beginning of our time together. Over the course of the past two years, each of us has experienced significant and deeply personal interactions among cohort members. These interactions have often focused on the different lenses and knowledge bases which we as individuals call upon to make meaning of our experiences. This meaning making is partly based upon ethnicity and cultural heritage. We came to a realization that, at least at times, colour is backgrounded and who we are as complex people was foregrounded.

The unique opportunity to participate in higher education and not be an isolated person of colour in a white classroom was named by the MIX as 'critical mass.' Students of colour found that having a critical mass of other students of colour supported greater self-esteem, deeper learning and a richer sense of the diversity and complexity within their cultures. Shakti describes her experience:

> Through the sharing of emerging scholarship with other people of colour, I have rocked in my bosom the stories I've shared with my Latina and Asian sisters. Together we recall the ancient wisdoms that abound among our peoples. Our mutual support has emboldened us to create theory - out of our own lives, out of our ghettoes, our barrios, our farms and ranches, out of the tales of our grandmothers - getting closer to ourselves, and to each other has filled us with a new power. We say to ourselves, 'I can, you can, we can.'

Our experience cannot be tied up in a neat package, however. The closer we look, the more complexities emerge. Contrary to Shakti's experience, Jean felt profoundly alienated from some of the people of colour throughout the two year program:

> As we all know, the people in our group who referred to the need for critical mass and acknowledgment of needs for people of colour did not address my obvious absence from their web of concern. In short, what I am saying is that I both defend my own views here (which differ) and reject the notion that people of colour can be grouped and spoken about in these ways. My life experience and my experience in the cohort says that people of colour are extremely diverse in their ways of learning and knowing, thinking, perceiving, etc.

Meili, a woman born in China and raised in both the Chinese and Japanese cultures, noticed the power of having another person of the same culture in the room. After Yongming Tang was with us for one day as a faculty guest, Meili noted that as the lone voice of her culture(s) the rest of the time in the cohort her culture remained largely invisible:

> As a marginalized multicultural element in American society, I found a parallel situation in the MIX ... In the end, the multiculturalism I experienced didn't really include my culture because I failed to bring it in.

Expecting to learn about the perspectives of people of colour, white students have most deeply and transformatively learned what it means to be *white*. Mat offers a glimpse of a white person becoming more conscious of what it means to be white, in his reflection following the first weekend:

> I felt pretty pleased afterwards, but I realized it was mainly because I was hiding something from myself. I had finished the weekend without publicly saying anything foolish or racist. There too, I found racism: the privilege of white people to have to fear only something as mundane as exposure rather than something as dangerous as incarceration and death because of the colour of their skin.

Eileen, a white woman, articulates more of a sense of what was learned about being white:

> We, white folks, are so embedded in the whiteness of our so called 'dominant' culture we often have an enormously difficult time seeing beyond the boundaries of our vision, we need to be 'rocked' out of our whiteness through experiencing contrast and dialogue. Cultural embeddedness is a major obstacle to transformative learning and emancipation of personal limitations in perception. In our cohort we have used the metaphor of 'like fish to water' to convey how we white folks make presumptions that others, particularly people of colour, are swimming in the same water, when in fact their pool maybe very different. In other words, white folks have a hard time initially seeing the racism of everyday life until it is brought to their attention. Once they 'get it' (i.e. see the racism everywhere), they then need to build skills and learn what to do to become agents of transformation and practitioners of anti-racism.

The theory behind the experience

In her poem, 'For the white person who wants to know how to be my friend' Pat Parker begins,

> The first thing you do is to forget that I'm Black.
>
> Second, you must never forget that I'm Black ...(in Anzaldua, 1990)

To better understand our experience, especially that of the white participants in the MIX, we use Frankenberg's (1988) analysis of the social construction of whiteness. Reviewing the historical discourse on race in the United States, she identifies an evolution through three stages. This country's original discourse on colour explained differences in race by physiology, genetics and culture - essentialist racism. The second movement constructed frames that popularized the idea that we are all the same - colour-blind racism. Implicit in this view is the belief that anyone who can not make it in this society bears sole responsibility for that failure. Frankenberg's third movement - race cognizance - focuses again on difference and refers to the impact of social structures upon people. In the beginning of our work together, many of the white participants were in Frankenberg's second phase and were moving to the third phase by the end, learning how to enact Pat Parker's advice to white persons.

Our multicultural learning community of people from diverse racial backgrounds contributed to our transformative learning with regards to race in three ways. First, the people of colour learned more about internalized oppression and gained greater appreciation for the diversity and complexity within a multiplicity of cultures. Second, the white participants learned what it means to be white, surfacing the assumption that the white perspective is universal - that being white is synonymous with being human. Third, we all gained a better understanding of the complexities of racism in a multicultural community. In many ways, our experience was a microcosm of the macrocosm of the world. Although our experience was difficult, challenging and cannot be tied up in a neat package, we believe our learning and transformation can contribute to the public discourse on multiculturalism and transformative learning.

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Getting to grips with barriers to reflection

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Abstract

Brookfield (1994) wrote a journal article entitled *Tales from the dark side* which was an analysis of adult critical reflection. He saw the need for this research because he felt that little attention had been paid to 'the way adults feel their way through critically reflective episodes - to understanding the visceral, emotive dimensions of this process'.

The truth is that the theoretical basis for reflection falls short of the realities in practice, what Brookfield (1994) refers to as 'emotional and cognitive flows ... periods of confusion and regression'. Current models of reflective practice illustrate this truth and fail to identify barriers to reflection within the process. The closest we come is in the work of Boud and Walker (1993) in which a brainstormed list of barriers to reflection is suggested, following a process of experiencing 'blocks' to learning by the authors.

This paper moves on from current thinking by examining real barriers to reflection experienced by the author in the process of 'getting to grips' with reflection. Experience is further shared by reflections on the effectiveness of different methods available in overcoming barriers.

The practice of critical reflection

Dewey is acknowledged as one of the first educationalists to describe the concept of reflection and he saw it as

> the active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supported form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and the further consideration to which it tends. (Dewey 1933)

Since Dewey's work, there has been considerable research into the meaning and process of reflection and both Boyd and Fales (1983) and Boud *et al* (1985) for example, clarify the meaning. They see the importance of experience within the learning cycle and it is only by focusing on the experience that we can reflect on it, and change behaviour as a result.

This clarification of the term reflection is examined in more detail by Jarvis (1992) who considers it from the perspective of the practitioner. The starting point for reflection by the practitioner would be when actions which are being monitored seem to be going wrong or when hindsight indicates that action has not produced an anticipated outcome.

Additionally reflection can occur as a result of practitioners analysing the expected outcomes of action to see whether they could have been achieved more efficiently. In my opinion, this is probably less likely to occur because it always seems harder to ask why actions have been successful than to investigate why they have failed to achieve their anticipated ends. The process involves 'more than recollection' (Maclean 1987), and the author's own experience confirms this, in that a journal of reflection in 1991 was a ramble through 'recollections'. The only learning was that reflection was a waste of time!

It can be seen therefore that reflective practice is something more than recollections and thoughtful practice. Schon (1983, 1987) guides us through the process of knowledge-in-action and demonstrates how the practitioner can use this to turn it into reflection-in-action, and reflection-after-action. Van Manen (1990, 1991) adds to this by introducing the concept of anticipatory reflection. Whatever the terms or processes that we use to understand reflection, Boud *et al* remind us of the importance of reflection by saying that

> we believe that processing and reflecting on the personal experience is clearly a major factor for developing higher level learning. (Boud *et al* 1993)

Current models of reflection

Titmus (1985), talking about the definition of a model, refers to the work of Tight (1985) who confirms that one of the recent developments in the study of adult education has been the growing attention paid to modelling. Kolb and Fry's (1975) work on Lewin's experiential learning cycle (1951) can be criticised for lack of depth because the nature of the stages on observation and reflection are not discussed in detail. Despite this criticism Marsick and Watkins (1992) use it as the basis for their model in which they depict a process of continuous learning in the workplace which incorporates reflective practice. Another model is that published by the FEU (1978) and again the nature of reflective practice is not explored in detail.

None of these models illustrate barriers that may be inherent in the process of reflection. Boud and Walker define barriers as

> those factors which inhibit or block a learner's preparedness for the experience, their active engagement in it, and their ability to reflect rationally on it with a view to learning from it. (Boud and Walker 1993)

'Naming' barriers to reflection

In 1985 Boud and his colleagues developed a model which put the process of reflection into context. At this time they were not aware of barriers which

hindered the process of reflection. In 1989 Boud and Walker reflected on the weaknesses of the model and produced a revised model (1990). It was not until Boud and Walker were preparing a chapter for their 1993 book that they became more concerned with critical reflection and barriers. So finally, in 1993 we see the emergence of barriers as a separate entity within the process of experiential learning and reflection, which largely came about due to Boud and Walker's experience of being 'blocked'.

Boud and Walker (1993) classify barriers as **internal** and **external** based on their origins in relation to the learner; internal barriers come from within the learner, such as:

> previous negative experiences, accepted presuppositions about what the learner can do, or about what learning can take place, a lack of awareness of one's assumptions, the emotional state of the learner established pattern of behaviour .... External barriers can come from people, the learning environment, the larger personal situation and context of the learner, and social forces such as stereotyping, cultural expectations, classism and so on. (Boud and Walker 1993).

Boud and Walker did not have a direct analysis of barriers to learning from experience, but brainstormed a list of eighteen barriers, a copy of which can be found in their 1993 text.

From 1991 to 1994 whilst actively engaged in the process of explicit critical reflection, I experienced many barriers, most of which are documented through a journal that I kept during this time. Some correspond with those of Boud and Walker, the main differences being that Boud and Walker's are more general, whilst mine are more specific. Examples of the barriers which I experienced are emotions and feelings, my own personal awareness, the environment and the keeping of a journal.

Emotions and feelings as a barrier to reflection

Boud *et al* (1985) in their earlier model of reflection talk about Stage 2 of the model *Attending to feelings* and stress that in reflecting it is important to work with any feelings which we may have. However Criticos cautions us,

> that much valuable learning occurs in circumstances which we would never choose to experience, if we knew what the end point would be, and if we were aware of what we would need to experience so as to get to the end point. (Criticos 1993)

This reminds me of a discussion on 'cupboards' within an Action Learning Set on reflection, my interpretation of cupboards being experiences which remain in a cupboard, behind locked doors which we do not want to revisit or reflect on. I find the whole cupboard a barrier, plus the locks on the door, and I do not know when I open the door whether there will still be something left inside, or whether the moths will have eaten it. But the significance to me, is that I do not want to know. Postle (1993) points out that 'engaging fully the affective elements can lead to anxiety, pain and discomfort', so for now I am happy to rest my hat on the door handle rather than putting it inside the cupboard.

Personal awareness as a barrier to reflection

This is, in my opinion, the most important barrier in reflecting on experience. If we are not personally aware that a barrier exists, then how can we possibly seek to overcome it?

When I first started having to reflect formally as part of a larger group discussion and to keep a diary, I hated it. One could say that there existed a pretty large barrier! The hardest thing for me to have done would have been to confront the barrier and to unravel it. My learning was seriously impeded in that I could not see the benefit of formally reflecting: 'it wasn't in my nature' or 'I'm too practical for things like that' were typical thoughts at the time.

> Am I writing about my thoughts/what has happened during this last week? ... Am I writing about my learning as a result of reflecting on the above? ... Am I just writing about anything? ... Am I writing about reflection? (Journal entry 1992)

You can see my confusion, so I gave up! For me, non-formal reflection, which I would define as reflection-in-action was all that I saw the relevance of.

Also coupled with this not knowing 'how' to reflect comes the feelings of not being 'able' or 'good' enough to undertake critical reflection, 'impostership' as Brookfield (1994) calls it. 'Someone cleverer than I' occurs more than once in my journal.

The environment as a barrier to reflection

I can remember that each time I wrote a journal entry, I made a note of the environment in which I was writing it.

> I have tried reflecting on the train whist going to London; at home; and now whilst invigilating an exam - yes its wonderfully quiet but is it the right environment in which to reflect? (Journal entry Action Learning Set on Reflection, Week 2, 1994)

I wrote subsequent diary entries whilst in the University canteen and whilst in a hotel lobby, and in both of these I resisted the temptation to eat but got down to the weekly chore. I was very mindful of Terry Waite who wrote a journal of reflections in his mind whilst in captivity, and I was reminded of his words

> I had heard of the underground prisons of Beirut: 'The Lebanese Gulag' as Terry Anderson described them. There were stories of prisoners being incarcerated for years in these places ... I sat down again and began to prepare myself for an ordeal ... Then I did what generations of prisoners have done before me. I stood up and, bending my head, I began to walk round and round and round and round. (Waite 1993)

The keeping of a journal as a barrier to reflection

A journal is a recognised method of evaluating personal experience by reflecting on it. My initial difficulty was that it is not easy to just pick up a pen and to start writing. My background means that I deal with facts and figures and judgements are based on these, not on feelings or thoughts which you may just happen to have at the time. Writing about personal experience was profoundly difficult. Boud *et al* (1993) suggest a possible reason for this in that the culture of academic and professional writing has always devalued personal experience in the 'quest for objectivity and generality'. So we can see two instant barriers that restrict personal writing, namely previous experience and the traditional nature of academic writing.

I did find that once I overcame the initial barrier of putting pen to paper, I struggled further because I did not have a focus. I was so used to someone telling me what to write about that I felt as though I was writing about nothing - I could not cope with this literary freedom. Also I struggled with the time management skills required in writing a journal - the heart was half willing but the time management was weak! I continued discussing my difficulties with the Set members

> ... Jayne commented on the amount of 'reflecting in the mind' which I had done. She said that it was far in excess of the reflecting that she had done, despite the fact that she had written a journal for that week ... We agreed that perhaps I thoroughly participated in the process of reflection and probably enjoyed and benefited from it. Perhaps what I was sceptical about was the process of journal writing. (Journal entry from Action Learning Set on Reflection, Week 4, 1994)

This proved a major breakthrough in my attempts to overcome my internal barriers to reflection, and it was an external source which had assisted in the process. By forcing myself to keep a journal which I disliked, on a subject I disliked, I found that it was not the subject at all that was at the centre of my aversion, but the process of journal writing itself. Walker (1985) refers to one of his students who had made a poignant comment when filling in an evaluation form,

> but I also thought it [keeping a journal] was a scary experience as I pushed away the overcoat of defences that had kept a lot of strong feelings or hard thoughts at bay. Working through this was hard, dammed hard at times.

So we have one small element of reflective practice in journal writing, yet many barriers are evident within it. I do still have a problem with journal writing and Boud and Walker (1993) refer to the fact that the real battleground for working with barriers is the learner. I have analysed various methods that I used for overcoming barriers, namely through oneself, with the help of a group, and with the help of a facilitator and these shall be discussed next.

Overcoming barriers by oneself

Boud and Walker (1993) identify a process for overcoming barriers starting with acknowledging that they exist. If I remind you of what I said previously about disliking reflection yet sticking with it, you can see how my experience accords with this suggestion. The easiest thing for me to have done would have been to give up completely because I did not want to know. Yet by working with the problem I realised that my barrier was with journal writing, which was an important landmark which Griffin (1987) calls 'naming' - 'the more clearly we can understand them, the more easily we can work with them' [barriers].

Overcoming barriers with the help of a group

My experiences of working within an Action Learning Set are that I found that I was able to learn from the group, since their experiences of using reflection in practice were invaluable. I was eager to persevere and not give up because I had made a commitment to participate in the Set.

Students working together can motivate each other and help sustain interest in the exercise (Walker 1985). I developed a commitment to the group because the group became an invaluable part of the reflective process, because 'we need, as learners, appropriate support, trust and challenge from others' (Boud *et al* 1993).

Overcoming barriers with the help of a facilitator

My experiences of journal writing over the past two years has been facilitated by different people. Boud and Walker refer to the importance of effective facilitation, yet I am mindful of a piece from Brookfield (1993) in which he tells us of the relevance of communication in which facilitators should 'create conditions in which authentic dialogue and communicative discourse can occur'.

My experience of being on the receiving end of facilitation is that the relationship between the two people is fundamentally important, and there needs to be a build up of trust. One reference in my journal when

discussing the use of journal writing states that 'I have half argued with Mike' and this was putting it mildly. Two years on, the fact that Mike saw reflection as 'deeply powerful' is still imprinted in my mind because I could not understand why Mike could see something which I could not. I learnt that I would not have been able to 'argue' with anyone had the facilitation not been effective. It would have been so easy for Mike to want to jump in all the time, but he did not. Brookfield (1993) reminds us that 'adult educators have to resist the temptation of hurtling precipitously and mindlessly into such exercises'. As a group we came across barriers and Mike was available to help in the discussion, not necessarily always knowing the answer, but at least effectively facilitating the process.

Conclusion

We can see that importance has to be placed on overcoming barriers to critical reflection because of the hindrance they can cause to the individual in trying to effectively learn from experience. Recognising and working with the barriers either by oneself or as part of a supportive community such as an Action Learning Set, may significantly help.

My own analysis of 'getting to grips' with the process of reflection illustrates that it is a long and painful process, with many sores and unhealed wounds. I am still going through a 'period of confusion and apparent regression' (Brookfield 1994) but at least if barriers are recognised within the community at large they can be tolerated both by the individual and the people around him/her more easily.

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Is there a future for community in continuing education?

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I hope to stimulate discussion about futures in two distinct, but related ways: first, whether and in what ways it will be possible to retain within university based continuing education the set of values, practices and audiences referenced by the notoriously loose concept of community education; second, whether community education theory is adequate to contemporary circumstances. I argue that socially purposive adult education (which, in the context of the universities, is sometimes synonymous with and sometimes in conflict with community education) has been better at taking education into the community than community into education. Its future - in respect of provision and policy - may appear intimately linked with the former, but I will argue that a distinctively radical social purpose depends upon the latter.

The lack of conceptual precision in the terms community and community education is well documented (Stacey 1969, Wilmott 1989 and Smith 1994). My preference would be to follow Smith in adopting the term 'local':

> The concern with the local links with the idea that learning is situated. Such understandings as we have are not 'things', they are not bundles of set images which can be simply taken from a shelf, dusted off and used; rather we build them in specific instances. So it is that I will talk of local educators and local education. (Smith 1994, 21)

But within radical adult education the term community education signals a particular set of values and relations it is helpful to retain, especially the concern with structural social and educational disadvantage. With this in mind, it is interesting, given the expansion of the higher education sector and the mainstreaming of continuing education, that in England community is absent from the proliferation of words and slogans describing and promoting these changes.

Considering the future of this strand of university continuing education, especially at a time when funding and structural regulations combine in such inauspicious ways, it is important not to overstate past achievements. Extremely valuable work has been, and continues, to be done with and for socially and educationally disadvantaged adults by university-based practitioners. Nevertheless, this work is statistically (if not ideologically) one amongst other aspects of the work of continuing education Departments. In my own department, during the 1993-94 session, for example, the Community and Industrial Studies section delivered 190 FTEs, compared with 134 from Access and 478 from Liberal Adult Education. Likewise, community education provided directly by university continuing education departments is a comparatively small contribution to the continuum of providers.

I offer these figures to underline the extent to which community has a relatively tenuous hold on continuing education. This is important when we consider the new futures envisioned for us in the move to mass higher education and the learning society. Peter Scott, who has written incisively and thoughtfully on these changes (Scott 1996), gave a key note address to the 1996 UACE conference which announced that 'Continuing education has no future at all, separate that is, from higher education.' Arguably, this was always the case: the elitism of higher education countered by extension; the realisation, post-Robbins, of how few working class people went to university continuing to feed it and, post-Russell, the development of thorough going programmes and purposes for adult education to redress educational disadvantage creating the impetus behind access. However, the current conjuncture sees two new changes which will have far-reaching implications for retaining the community link as a purpose within continuing education. First, there is the switch from extra- to intra-mural pre-occupations, whether experienced as the checks on curriculum development and delivery following accreditation and mainstreaming, the diminished responsiveness (in speed and in kind) to learner or community expressed needs and interests or the lead agency role some departments have been given, which is envisaged by Scott (1996) as a catalyst to move the whole of the university away from its pre-occupation with teenagers, full-time study and professional elites. In doing so, the professional role of community educators changes as they become managers and distributors of learning. How compatible is this with the practice of community education, rooted as it has been in relationships which are relatively unmediated through institutions and where credibility develops out of a willingness to work alongside people, embedding professional practice in the rhythm of their needs, priorities and enthusiasms?

Not very, I'd suggest, and the distancing effect is compounded by the second qualitative shift. Here continuing education is looking outwards from the university, but does so wearing its cap and gown: to offer progression, credit accumulation transfer, professional development. This foregrounding of continuing education's role in relation to other

educational frameworks can be seen as beneficial, in that it makes possible more diverse points of entry and more flexible participation in further and higher education. However, to benefit from this, students and potential students must share the same starting points as the institutions: to have understood the concept of progression and to feel entitled or capable of participating. The extent to which many of these students are clearly either socially or educationally (or both) disadvantaged, and the positive response from many of them to credit-bearing courses underlines the importance of new moves to consolidate work in guidance, pathways and progression.

However, the social and economic changes of the last decade have created dispossession as well as disadvantage. Retaining a link to community in continuing education means resisting the powerful ideological separation between the two, reminiscent as it is of the perennial distinctions between the deserving and undeserving poor. I deliberately use the word 'dispossessed' as it evokes the lived experience of the New Right's attack on welfare. Ian Martin puts it succinctly:

> What changed most radically during the decade of Thatcherism was not so much the infrastructure of the Welfare State as the way we were encouraged to think about it. In short, it became acceptable, even respectable, to regard the publicly financed institutions of education, health and welfare as a national liability rather than a national asset ... from a beast of burden to a beast of prey. (Martin 1992, 29)

There is direct continuity with the past. The pioneering work in university based community education of Brookfield (1983), Lovett (1975, 1988), Ward and Taylor (1986) and Thompson (1980) has, to some extent, become the commonsense of the sector a generation on. In this way, it is possible to see the changes in the post-compulsory sector as a vindication of their arguments, particularly about access and non-traditional students, and to see opportunity, rather than threat, in continuing education's new conditions of existence. In recognising - and celebrating - this achievement it is important to remember the derision and hostility with which their ideas were first received and to understand that this will have to be faced again by the new generation of activists seeking to extend the domain of privilege that higher education remains.

Such extension will continue to be about who education is for, but also - and more contentiously - what that education is, and what it is for. In terms of who education (whether adult, continuing, further or higher) is for, areas where there have been significant gains, such as opening up higher education for women, can give an overall optimistic picture that breaks up under closer scrutiny. For example, the male gender bias in patterns of employment and seniority in the sector indicate slow and resisted change as do surveys of recruitment into particular discipline areas, where gender differentiation persists as it does across sectors. Similarly, the expansion of participation in mainstream higher education is well documented as an expansion of middle class participation with very small increases in the number of undergraduates from working class families. Areas where there has been consistently less progress (for example, in attracting home based students from ethnic minorities or creating accessible campuses, and hence attracting as a matter of course, rather than exception, students with sensory or mobility disabilities) continue to need focus and concerted action.

Much of the work in continuing education which addresses these issues, providing a location for community in continuing education, does so in the form of project work. To a great extent this is both appropriate and relatively unproblematic. However, it can produce problems, not least because of its built-in ephemerality. It causes problems 'out there', as needs and community development rarely follow funding schedules neatly. Problems of trust and confidence arise as projects move into and out of localities, target groups and subject areas in ways which confound and baffle people living and moving between them. It also gives rise to problems within institutions, not least that if work of this kind has always to be funded through special projects, it suggests that it has a discretionary status. This can be compounded by different employment conditions for workers, which can cause friction within workplaces: project workers resenting their very tenuous security of employment but being resented for their greater flexibility to fund and organise activities. Projects often exist alongside, rather than being in a position to influence, the main direction of an institution's work. In this way, projects underline rather than resolve continuing education's ambivalent - if not contradictory - relation to mainstream academic life. They are also, to return to my original argument about the direction and weighting of community within continuing education, predominantly about taking education out to the community.

A further negative effect of the way community education in continuing education is project-based is how this works against developing and discussing theory. Although ideas are - or can be - material, and are likely to be influencing actions and decisions, even if unconsciously, there is a tendency in community education to value and adopt an empirical approach. I began work on a UFC/HEFCE funded research project in 1992 aware that evaluating cultural activity (writing groups) within and as community education would be

difficult using the existing social action frameworks. It is, however, possible to make the argument, as I did, that although cultural activity may seem marginal by comparison with work centred in overt social deprivation, the process emphasis of community education de-centres its subject, whether that subject is welfare rights or poetry. So, although it may seem more difficult to perceive writing as socially useful knowledge and/or transformative social practice, once the false polarity of the individual and the social is broken, to be better understood as a constant crossing and re-crossing of boundaries between the social in the individual, the individual in the social, the materiality of writing is clear.

Similarly, writing's awkward dependence on individual creativity poses problems, but foregrounding the interaction between the individual and the social, which writing and writing groups do, generates a new perspective on identity and belonging, which are a common concern across community education. They thread into the wider understandings of locality and community that underpin all community education and have a particular force in a social climate where identity and belonging are under political assault. These campaigns - Back To Basics, Family Values - are profoundly ideological. They secure not only a particular family form (mum, dad and the kids) but model the defeat of society by family. The development of a public space, such as the writing group, in which a range of identities and experience can be explored and critically discussed is to be valued, especially as so many participants in community education are positioned outside this new definition of family as society - single parents, single people, including lesbians and gay men, people on benefits, members of ethnic minority groups and people with disabilities. Similarly, valuing independence in learning becomes increasingly complex now that the most vocal critiques of dependency come from the political right. Entitlement, which may initially be expressed as dependence, is perhaps a rational response from people already at the sharp end of free market forces who are decidedly cynical about how available, and how good for them, freedoms really are. Although earlier forms of community education honed their radical edge against a discourse of liberalism which included a powerful commitment to entitlement, perhaps the new conjuncture renders it radical? Helplessness is a response to a lack of agency. An imperative to independence, whether given to a group implicitly through the behaviour and values it validates or explicitly as injunction, cannot overcome the conditions of powerlessness that produce dependency.

Our current theories of community education, grounded as they are in fieldwork from the 1970s and early 1980s, are not a great deal of help in thinking through these issues or in drawing out the implications of the very different circumstances under which we all - higher education, community and continuing education and the communities with whom we work - now live. The concept of entitlement can be radicalised by shifting the weighting away from taking education into the community to thinking about ways in which community can come into, and change, education.

Doing so involves a challenge to the notion of universal knowledge and objectivity which characterises academic practice and values. The regulation and legitimation of knowledge generation and its applications are the terrain of this work. Although continuing education has been premised on a critique of exclusion, which has sometimes made it difficult to progress a critique of academic practice, it is arguably only by so doing that continuing education can retain a radical social purpose. In doing so it will be important to avoid the tendency to legitimise some forms of social action and belonging at the expense of others. An embryonic debate about agendas for adult education history (Chase 1995, Fieldhouse 1996) signals a concomitant friction in contemporary policy and practice, where the 'big picture' is seen to be under threat from, as opposed to made up of, 'meaningless detail' (Fieldhouse 1996, 119). Concerns and arguments of this kind can only increase as continuing education seeks to extend work with marginalised and minority groups.

Recent work in Sussex (Stuart and Thompson 1995) sets out a rationale for such work and indicates how it might be initiated and developed. The honesty with which misjudgment and difficulty, as well as success, is discussed offers a model for new ways of writing and thinking about community education as does their ability to distinguish specific and variable relationships to education which avoid the collapse into a meaningless cultural relativism. Their afterword, noting the implications of how HEFCE's 'widening provision' funds have been allocated, rings the death knell for community-based provision of a kind which has characterised community in continuing education to date. In this sense, there is no future. But if continuing educators can work across and through the discourse of education, rather than simply for their discrete institutions, a future is possible: one in which not only community education, but also higher education, as we know it disappear to be replaced by a more fluid and accessible system of lifelong learning in which old distinctions and polarities - between the academic and the vocational, between skills and knowledge - disappear.

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Assessing values

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The issues of assessment and values have both become urgent for various reasons. Values have become an issue for many teachers and researchers in all aspects of education given the reduced amount of funding available and the pressure to overcome this reduction by pursuing income generating activities. There is pressure on universities, further education colleges and adult education institutions to deliver output related targets which bring in funding. In some cases the funding for this comes from the Single Regeneration Bids (SRB) provided for local authorities by central government. Most of the public sector has either been privatised or has been exposed to privatisation on a large scale and it appears that universities are not far behind as the recent discussions on student loans show. It is highly likely that even a change in government will not stop the implementation of all students obtaining loans rather than grants. In this light, values are a crucial consideration for those teachers and researchers who may have alternative agendas to the market led education that has arrived.

Assessment has become an issue especially over the last decade as the reform in vocational qualifications (and other initiatives such as the national curriculum in schools) has led to the review of assessment systems. The development of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) with criterion-referenced assessment systems has opened up a debate on assessment. The current preference of policy makers and qualification designers is for criterion-referenced assessment systems rather than norm-referenced systems. The debate on NVQs and adult education has produced a significant literature. The aim of this paper is not go over this debate but to examine issues relating to assessing values.

Primarily I want to examine the purposes of assessment and outline the differences between assessing values with a criterion-referenced system (NVQs) and a norm-referenced system (adult education academic courses). I want to explore the broad issues that emerge when assessing values within both assessment frameworks.

Norm-referenced assessment depends basically on comparing the performance of an individual with the performances of all members of the group which is taking part in the assessment. In criterion-based assessment the criteria are defined and have to be clearly communicated.

In teaching, values pose some difficulty as teaching is a very personal occupation. The value positions taken by teachers are likely to be rooted in deep-seated beliefs. Teachers may expect to articulate the views they hold in their teaching and expect their students to show some understanding or acknowledgement of these values. The concept of a dominant value system derives from Marx's statement that ' the ideas of the ruling class are in every age, the ruling ideas', while the concept of subordinate value system is, as Parkin (1981) states, 'the generating milieu of this meaning-system is the local working class community'. Some teachers may subscribe to the latter concept of values and accordingly design their curriculum. A teacher may work in education because they believe in equality and feel that education can contribute to social transformation or because they believe that it has a limited impact on society but may help some students to improve their life chances in a market led economy. For some teachers values may take the form of upholding the status quo of the market economy and for others it may mean challenging institutional rules, e.g. entry qualifications for specific courses. There will also be an issue of values that favour the collective against those that favour the individual. The issue here is that whatever values the teacher may believe in, these values may have to be assessed to identify if the teacher has either managed to convey them to students or to test them against the students' values.

There are a number of ways of looking at the purposes of assessment. The question 'why assess' will depend on 'very much the perspective or the discipline that underlines the question' (Butterfield 1990). An anthropologist might see assessment in terms of social ritual while a sociologist might view assessment in terms of social engineering. The perspective of assessment also alters over time as Morris states that examinations 'can be a means of maintaining standards ... an incentive to effort, an administrative device and a tool of social engineering' (Wiseman 1961).

One commonly held view of assessment is that it motivates students. One point of view here is that competition between students will encourage them to make a greater effort. This view implies that league tables where achievement (or lack of achievement) are sufficiently public for students to be said to be in competition. Here the problem is that for students at the top of the class or performing well this may be encouraging but very limited for the rest. Another viewpoint on assessment is that students will gain confidence and direction from the feedback process on their achievements. This model requires a more individual approach so that a student has information about their performance on a given assignment and progress can be recorded by reference to the student's own past performance. Here the success of the model will depend upon the teacher having clear objectives

and upon the students knowing what these are. If the assessment process is itself to be motivating then the assessment criteria must be clearly understood.

Another purpose of assessment may be diagnostic. Formative assessment, which takes place during a course which may identify areas where students need additional support, is such a case. This assessment may take place by use of test materials and in some cases the teacher is continually making diagnostic assessments of individuals or groups. This type of assessment is often informal and often impressionistic.

Selection is the most powerful use of assessment. Given that career and postgraduate education opportunities are finite and there are fewer places than the number who demand them means that they are regulated. This use of assessment means that only a proportion of students must achieve any particular level as represented by a grade. Selection is generally about de-selection.

Finally certification which is associated with the criterion-referenced assessment model and outside the academic system has seen a growth in its use with the development and implementation of NVQs.

The inclusion of a value base in the development of NVQs was undertaken seriously by the Care Sector Consortium who oversaw the development of the O Unit. This unit is concerned with the implementation of equal opportunities and candidates have to provide evidence or demonstrate an understanding of equalities issues within their work roles if they are to be assessed as competent; the unit forms part of all Care NVQs. Although values have to be assessed, there are problems associated with this process. There is always the possibility of the assessor making judgements based on the candidate's personal characteristics or their relationship with the assessor. There are issues of race and gender which can affect the assessment of values within a criterion-referenced assessment model. For example some studies have shown that individuals rate candidates of their own ethnic group more highly than candidates from different groups. (Hammer, Kim, Baird and Bigoness 1974). If a black candidate is assessed by a white assessor for the O Unit, this can often lead to difficulties for both; for the black candidate to have to demonstrate to a white middle class assessor that they implemented or tried to implement anti-discriminatory practice can at times be a frustrating exercise if the institution they work for does not provide them support in this area. For the white assessor who may be sympathetic and aware of this issue it may also be problematic as they have to assess a member of a discriminated minority who has no power within the institutional hierarchy to implement anti-discriminatory practice. In addition it is also frustrating for the black candidate, even if they are assessed to be competent, because they have demonstrated knowledge and understanding but the reality does not change; discrimination still exists. The same situation can apply to gender issues. This begs the question as to why assess values at all?

In addition there is the issue of having values assessed using a separate unit like the O Unit or as integrated within all the units as in community work NVQs. In the development of community work standards this was a crucial issue as it was felt that there were differences between the caring professions and community work. For example community work aims to tackle inequality and therefore anti-discriminatory practice is at the root of its practice, while caring professions have a statutory obligation within their work which requires care workers to work within a legal framework and also requires them to maintain confidentiality; community work does not have such a legal framework.

In addition caring professions entail working with individuals while community work requires community workers to work with groups. The issue here is that in assessing values while personal effectiveness is important, different approaches exist depending on the sector. The O Unit sees personal effectiveness as important in minimising discrimination while community work sees personal effectiveness as part of the commitment to community work which challenges injustice.

While a value base is integrated in some NVQs how are values assessed on an adult education course that uses norm-referenced assessment model? A teacher working in adult education may feel that they are articulating their values by working more hours than they are contracted for; they may also feel that by offering courses for those who have no formal qualifications they are articulating their values. For some this may also be demonstrated by offering courses for specific groups, such as courses for women only. Values and 'added value' are often confusing in this context. A teacher may have a value which they might implement, such as developing and offering courses for those students with disabilities only; however, what would be the 'added value' in this context ? The concept of 'added value' has always led to debates in terms of measurement. For the purpose of this paper I only want to point out that the difference between a value and 'added value' should be recognised.

The main methods of assessments here are through essays and dissertations. Does the teacher assess values by examining the political standpoint taken by a student in an essay or a dissertation? If this is the case then there is an issue of academic freedom which may have to be considered.

For example will a teacher teaching the injustice of market forces on sections of the community expect his or her students to reflect the acceptance of this view in the essays they have to write? If this is one way of assessing values, what contribution does the *value aspect* of the essay make to the overall grading of the essay? Furthermore are students aware of the contribution the value aspect of the essay will make to the overall grade?

Do teachers in adult education using norm-referenced assessment models assess values with a cognitive model of values? Are values assessed separately but linked to the overall argument in the essay, or, are values assessed as intrinsic to the argument in the essay?

The latter point of assessing values separately or intrinsically runs parallel to criterion-based assessment models where in the Care NVQs values are assessed separately but linked to other units, while in Community Work NVQs values are assessed intrinsically.

Both criterion- and norm-referenced assessment models have some common issues in relation to assessing values. Both forms of assessment can be subjective. There are power relationships at work between the assessor and the candidate, and the teacher (and examiner) and the student. The potential for bias creeping in is also present in both assessment models. Both are bureaucratic; criterion-referenced assessment models require collection of evidence in the form of a portfolio, while the norm-referenced assessment model requires essays and or dissertations. Furthermore both form the overall bureaucracy of any educational institution with their respective forms that have to be completed.

When a candidate begins collecting evidence for a Care NVQ they are made aware of the O Unit and the evidence they have to provide; there are problems here of the quantity of evidence that has to be provided. For a student following a course in adult education how are issues of values made clear in that they form part of the curriculum? Is being critical of the capitalist system (the current term for this is market forces) articulating a value? It could be argued that this is not so, because there are those on the Right (for example, the Adam Smith Institute) in this country who criticise capitalism for not going far enough. Do students have to explicitly provide an understanding of values in the essays they write? The answer to this may depend on the teacher concerned and their beliefs as to how far they want values to play a part in the curriculum. This leads back to the starting point: why are values assessed? Whose values are they? How are they being assessed?

Both criterion-referenced and norm-referenced assessment systems have their problems as highlighted above. Can values be assessed so that they can be objective and can compensate for social divisions within society?

This perhaps is a starting to consider when assessing values.

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Guidance: a case-study in difference

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Introduction

In this paper I hope to demonstrate that the term 'guidance' refers to a series of related activities which happen in different contexts, and relate in different ways to individual biographies and social sites. I shall develop this with brief examples from current policy and practice in the field of 'guidance'. I shall suggest that this complexity can be understood in a number of ways: as part of an ideological assertion of labour market outcomes as the only valid outcomes of education and training; as characteristic of the re-assertion of discipline and control within a typically fragmented late modern setting; as characteristic of the complex ways in which social actors relate their personal biographies to social change, drawing on the work of social theorists such as Giddens, Beck and Habermas. Throughout, I shall stress the particular urgency of issues around 'guidance' in deprived working-class communities.

Guidance: an ever-expanding ripple or an organised network?

Guidance is a normative activity. Educational guidance in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland has been characterised by a powerful professional organisation (NAEGA) and the successive setting out and repetition of those activities and principles which are seen to be central to educational guidance work (for example UDACE 1986). The activities are informing, advising, counselling, assessing, enabling, advocating and feeding back. The principles are that guidance should be client-centred, confidential, open to all adults, accessible to all adults, independent in its advice, publicised widely and able to contribute to the development of learning opportunities. However, as set out by UDACE (1986), these principle were meant to inform the work of guidance networks, while in fact it is specific agencies which have taken forward guidance work in specific geographical locations (Payne and Edwards 1996, 6/7). There has been an increasing divergence between the professional statements about guidance and the reality of the practical, working situations of guidance workers.

Table 1: a guidance typology

Guidance context	Guidance providers (Hawthorn 1995)	Guidance providers (Mid Glamorgan TEC 1996)
Independent of education or training institutions or employers	Careers Service TECs Educational Guidance Services	Careers, education, training and employment advice (including TEC Guidance Service)
	Employment Service Private guidance services	Job Search and Employment advice
	Other guidance providers	Women's groups Youth Service Community Care Disability and Special Needs services
	Other advice agencies	Citizens Advice Bureaux Libraries Benefits advice Financial advice (including educational grants) Childcare advice
Education- and training-based guidance	Schools	n/a
	Further Education	Colleges Basic skills advice
	Higher Education institutions	Higher Education Access to HE
	Community Education	Community Education
	Training and assessment providers	Training organisations
Employment-based guidance	Employers	Employers
	Professional associations	n/a

Rather than pursue conceptual analysis of the term 'guidance', it would seem to make more sense to accept the diversity of guidance, to establish the range of agencies which offer guidance, and then to look at the implications for quality and access of such a typology. Hawthorn (1995) offers a typology which categorises agencies within three broad headings. In Table 1, I have compared this with agencies identified in a recently published guidance directory from South Wales (Mid Glamorgan TEC 1996).

This typology begins to express the complex social situations that people find themselves in when approaching any agency for guidance, together with the complex interrelationships between education and training on the one hand, and issues of childcare, benefits, poverty and social dislocation on the other. What is important from the client's point of view is not the degree to which a guidance agency can conform to an ideal type service offering a pre-determined range of activities according to previously ordained principles, but that s/he is clear about the 'rules of engagement' present at a guidance interview, that agencies are linked to one another in networks which actively refer clients according to their particular needs and interests, and that evaluation monitors the outcomes of the guidance offered in relation to the stated working principles of that particular agency. Ideally, such a network would include: an independent service corresponding to the 'ideal type', able to offer general guidance, perhaps linked to a telephone helpline, and able to refer clients on to providers, to specialised agencies providing careers guidance, personal counselling or help on specific issues such as disability, finance or childcare; gencies providing specialist counselling (as above); agencies able to offer guidance in languages other than English; guidance linked to providers of education and training; guidance in community settings, linked to community organisations, in order to ensure maximum accessibility to the network.

Such a network would be in a position to provide a transparent and accessible service to people in a given geographical area. Referrals would take place both 'up' the network (to a higher level of generality) and 'down' the network (to a higher level of specificity).

Guidance and ideology

Neo-liberal economic orthodoxy not only takes an extremely narrow view of those activities which should count as 'economic' (excluding for example damage to personal health or the natural environment as a direct result of 'economic' activity) but also insists on the subjugation of other aspects of the social world to these narrowly understood 'economic' imperatives. This analysis applies especially to the relationship of education to employment. It is therefore clearly important to point out that the continuity of guidance discourse masks organisational changes, especially the move from independent free-standing educational guidance services in the 1980s to institution-based agencies and others more or less directly dependent on the Careers Service, Employment Service, or Training and Enterprise Councils. As Table 1 shows, at one level such services are 'independent' of providers of education and training. But at the ideological level, they provide services based on handed-down conceptions of the relationships between education, training and employment (Forrester *et al* 1995), and therefore of the role of guidance. Thus the many possible outcomes of guidance come to be reduced increasingly to possible employment outcomes, even in local contexts of high unemployment where there is little prospect of skilled work.

If the process of guidance is influenced by ideological assumptions in apparently 'independent' services, it is also influenced by the context of education-based or employment-based guidance. Guidance services attached to education and training providers are likely to make the reasonable assumption that the client who has approached them is most interested in the courses available at that institution, whatever such a service may say in principle about its impartiality (Payne and Edwards 1996, Connelly *et al* 1996). This creates the undesirable situation where the professional rhetoric of impartiality conflicts with the practical demands and constraints of the job.

The actual outcomes of such guidance cannot be read off from either statements of principle (for example 'we offer impartial guidance') or a critical commentary on the apparently selfish motives of employers or education and training providers who invest in guidance. Current evaluative work on which I am engaged for SOLOTEC in relation to Employee Development shows that progressive employers recognise that the motivational importance of providing employees with general educational opportunities is just as important as providing relevant high quality training. Similarly, the empirical evidence reported in Payne and Edwards (1996) showed that some guidance workers did indeed behave 'impartially' to their clients by pointing out opportunities available to them at other institutions.

Guidance as discipline and control

Usher and Edwards (1995) have developed a critique of the practices of guidance based on their reading of Foucault's work on discipline and control. They claim that the 'confessional' nature of guidance leads to new forms of control over individuals in which they discipline their own desires rather than being coerced from without. However, there is a

problematic leap in associating Foucault's concept of 'the confessional' with guidance activities. These range over a variety of encounters from a relatively simple asking for and receiving of information to more complex encounters where 'counselling' may well involve an element of 'confession.' It seems the case that clients of guidance services are far more likely to be constrained by the multiple problems of their socio-economic context than by the exercise of discipline through the confessional encounter with a guidance worker. As Payne and Edwards (1996, 16) argue, based on fieldwork in London colleges:

> Impartiality exists in a partial world where both people's lives and the educational opportunities open to them appear to be determined in ways beyond the reach of the individual social actor.

For many adults, it is not a matter of selecting one choice rather than another, but of whether any choice will offer a viable solution to the problems of childcare, money, unsocial working hours and transport. Such constraints are not only constructed by such well-known factors as 'race', class and gender, but also by geographical factors. Thus a potentially very interesting feature of my work-in-hand on the evaluation of guidance activities in Mid Glamorgan (NIACE Cymru for Mid Glamorgan TEC) is the contrast between the M4 corridor where there is heavy inward investment from countries such as Japan, and the coal-mining villages of the Welsh Valleys which are having to reconstruct their social and economic fabric from a very low base indeed.

In confronting Foucault's contradiction that individuation leads not only to greater personal freedom but a reconfiguration of the nature of social control, we are also confronting the irony that guidance, an activity which has so often been linked to the ideal of human emancipation, can also serve the contradictory role of reasserting control by external forces. However, to over-emphasise this point may be precisely to overplay the actual influence of guidance activities in individuals' lives, a subject on which there is little empirical evidence available.

Guidance and social change in the late modern world

Social change is something which social actors have thrust upon them but in which they themselves participate as actors. While the motors of change (technological advance, changes in the pattern of global capitalist accumulation) may come from without, social actors strive individually and socially to make sense of their world and to give meaning and direction to their personal (auto)biographies. And of course the meanings they give to experience relate not only to economic realities, but also to their own sense of 'difference', the patterns of social solidarity, consumption, sexual desire and relationship with the numinous which distinguish the complex sub-groups of the late modern world.

At the same time, the traditional, humanist model of a universalised 'self' which is knowable through developmental work seems inadequate in the face of the complexity of the late modern world (Payne and Edwards 1996, passim). Characteristically social actors become disembedded from patterns of class, gender and location which have previously structured the self. Identity becomes troubled and troubling in the contemporary period, as part of a wider anxiety about the instability of identity. In this context, the various practices contained within the umbrella term 'guidance' mark the processes by which professional knowledge mediates between individuals and the possible choices available to them, just as education itself is closely related to the process of reflexive modernisation (Beck 1992, 93). As Giddens has noted, 'fateful moments' (e.g. unemployment, the breakdown of a relationship, relocation to a new area or country)

> often mark periods of reskilling and empowerment. They are points at which, no matter how reflexive an individual may be in the shaping of her self-identity, she has to sit up and take notice of new demands as well as new possibilities. At such moments, when life has to be seen anew, it is not surprising that endeavours at reskilling are likely to be particularly important and intensely pursued ... Fateful moments are transition points which have major implications not just for the circumstances of an individual's future conduct, but for self-identity ... For consequential decisions, once taken, will reshape the reflexive project of identity through the lifestyle consequences which ensue. (Giddens 1991, 142/3)

This relatively optimistic account of the process by which the thread of self-identity (understood as biography) may be woven has to be set against the unequal distribution of risk and opportunity in contemporary society. For Giddens the reflexive project of the self is a phenomenon which goes beyond 'those in more privileged material circumstances' (Giddens 1991, 5) yet which becomes entangled in the web of socio-economic forces beyond individual control, because

> class divisions and other fundamental lines of inequality, such as those connected with gender and ethnicity, can be partly defined in terms of differential access to forms of self-actualisation and empowerment ... Modernity, one should not forget, produces

> difference, exclusion and marginalisation. (Giddens 1991, 6)

The same ambivalence is present in Beck: while emphasising the universality of risk in the late modern world (Beck 1992, 13), he does concede that there is a link between risk and social exclusion in his memorable phrase 'Wealth accumulates at the top, risks at the bottom' (Beck 1992, 35). While all groups are likely to be affected by an escape of radioactive gases from a power-station (as at Chernobyl), poorer people find it much more difficult to change their diet when toxic substances enter the food chain (as with the BSE beef problem) and less qualified people are more at risk from the kind of unemployment generated by economic and technological change. It is precisely for these reasons that policy proposals in relation to guidance need to be evaluated by the extent to which they bring guidance to those impoverished by and excluded from the wealth of recent years. Whether this is by technological means (e.g. telephone helplines) or through the use of community-based networks, or, ideally, by a combination of both, social policy must take account of the unequal distributions of both risk and opportunity which structure contemporary society.

In emphasising the importance of guidance networks for securing access to educational opportunities by deprived individuals and communities, account must be taken of the critique by Collins (1995) and others of the unproblematic use of the term 'learning'. It is a matter of disengaging the 'learner' as social actor from the 'learner' as the object of educational policy and consumer of pre-packaged and ideologically loaded knowledge. Collins uses the Habermasian distinction between lifeworld and system world to draw attention to critical adult education as reinstating concepts such as tutor rather than facilitator, education rather than learning, inputs rather than outcomes and skills, knowledge and understanding rather than competence. Furthermore, these are understood in the context of social movements rather than professionalisation. In the same volume, Welton writes of an 'autonomous and exuberant civil society' (Welton 1995: 155) dealing with conflicts that 'arise along the seams between system and lifeworld' (Habermas 1987 in Welton 1995, 154). In arguing for guidance to be located in networks which span the worlds of social movements and organised education, I am arguing for forms of guidance which see the self as neither an unchanging (the humanist tradition) or fickle (the postmodern position) entity, but as located in a specific socio-economic environment which structures, without determining, the possibilities which form the content of guidance.

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Positions of race and gender in adult continuing education: excluded discourses

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This paper is taken from a substantive piece of ongoing research on discourses amongst under-represented groups and their interface with higher education discourses. The themes in this paper will not necessarily be included in that research, though I feel they are worthy of exposure, albeit in this under-developed form.

I shall outline the main features of the theory and briefly describe the research strategy. This will be followed by identification of some themes which problematise normative assumptions about adult learners, their values and expectations for education. I conclude by suggesting that adult education provision in this country often fails to recognise such cultural differences.

Feminist, poststructuralist literature is now often a reference point for the recognition of multiplicity and difference and shifting identities amongst women (Henwood 1994). However, in order not to de-stabilise the value of racial differences and unrecognised knowledge a number of black feminists argue for a 'strategic essentialism' which questions some of the emphasis in poststructuralist thought on fragmentation, as opposed to collective issues regarding oppression or racism for example (McRobbie 1994, Bhavnani 1994, Brah 1994, hooks 1984, Hill Collins 1990). An additional factor in this paper is my own researcher ethnicity as white, Western European. The methodological issues surrounding white researchers 'on' women of colour are the subject of another paper. Nevertheless, awareness of the dangers of a white academic structural tendency to reproduce dominant representations did influence both how I obtained my data and how I developed my analysis. This paper tries to recognise the above arguments and perspectives in its analysis of interviews from ten women, most of whom had recently migrated from Pakistan and India.

Post structuralism claims that identities are multiple and fragmented, while knowledge is contextual and situated within a constantly changing set of experiences. People's interpretations of truth, knowledge and their own identity are contingent on how they are positioned in discourses. The extent to which their own definitions of truth or knowledge are recognised - or how far they resist oppressive definitions of themselves depends on how they relate to dominant power structures (Weedon 1987). Feminist poststructuralist models of analysis use poststructuralist theories to understand gender power relations and explain how they were constructed historically. However, as stated earlier, women of colour in particular have warned against the dangers of re-inscribing concepts by using a white, Western discourse model to explain power relations in other cultures. The analysis must therefore start from the standpoint of the marginalised discourse and ascertain the meanings and values of that discourse as the starting point (Henwood 1994).

Discourses are the systems, language and strategies for sustaining cultural values and regimes of truth. Discourses, however, are influenced by resistances and events in time, often resulting in reconstructed logic which rationalises the new state of being and why things are done in a certain way. Foucault describes this process as 'historicity'.

The empirical study tries to identify discourses of alternative truths and reality by allowing marginalised groups to speak on their own terms. The theoretical analysis attempts to interpret the multiple positions of the interviewees by recognising their own changing boundaries and consequent representations of truth and reality in relation to education and learning.

Background to the study

Lancaster University's Community Access Programme provides community based, culturally relevant courses for people who are disproportionately under-represented in its mainstream provision. The programme provided a research context to explore people's perceptions of education and universities. I chose for my study three different adult communities who were participating in the programme. The group under discussion consisted of ten women who had been educated in India or Pakistan and were attending bilingually supported courses in one of two separate locations. Their ages ranged from 20 to 35. They were interviewed in their mother tongue by role model tutors and their responses translated by the interviewer into a second tape for transcribing.

Analysis of the interviews involved a grounded theory approach of deductive analysis (Glaser and Strauss 1968, Patton 1980). The poststructuralist framework was then applied to the findings, to help me draw theoretical conclusions based on the standpoint of the interviewees. The themes under discussion here are extraneous to my main thesis. However, they demonstrate how discourse is fluid and fragmented, but can also represent the strategic essentialism of cultural difference. The effect of geographical space, as well as place, and time span circumstances on the young women being interviewed highlights clashes of difference with Western normative values. The first section problematises space as it is constructed in the West and interpreted by the migrant women.

Space and gender

One of the role model interviewers, Raana, described how new Pakistani arrivals see Britain, their 'promised land':

> You always find one fixed term that everybody says when they come from

> Pakistan about England and it's always - 'This place is like a prison'.

For the Pakistani women the interpretation of 'prison' as closed and enclosed is both physical and social. As Raana said:

> The English are quite a closed race and the houses are closed ... closed rooftops ... walled houses ... everything is so enclosed ... so it looks like a prison for them.

To understand the context of such expressions, Raana explained the women's other reality as it applied to their lives in Pakistan. She referred to a lifestyle where people sleep on rooftops, shops are bazaars where people shout out as you pass by, and where social interaction is sustained by constant and 'unsubtle' enquiry into each other's lives. Raana summarised: 'You approach people, people never approach you here and in that sense it's almost like a prison'.

The contrast between these concepts of openness and closure suggest that western methods of interaction will be seen as closed and uninviting. Massey (1994) challenges how space is commonly defined negatively and in relation to time as 'absence', rather than part of a network of relationships. Certainly the indications are that the women saw their space in India or Pakistan as dynamic and active, in contrast to the image of space in this country as representing the gap between walled enclosures, where nothing happens. The often Western perception of Asian women's behaviour as enclosed, then, is positioned in a geographical power relationship with wider society views of public and private space which impinge on women's spatial interaction. Benhabib (1992) critiques the Western notion of private and public space and the need to renegotiate these domains. The effect of western discourses for private and public space appear to reverse values which are highly significant for Muslim women in particular, whose notion of public and private female space is very distinct from male space. The gendering of space and place had its effect on women's education in India and Pakistan and it is against this background that the women positioned themselves regarding education in Britain.

Education, gender and place

Pakistan and India represent a large geographical expanse of towns and villages which function at very different levels of social and economic security. All ten women stated that their childhood education was encouraged by the family up to the point where it was deemed financially or practically viable according to the accessibility of local, single sex provision. Then for some education became something which was taught in the home by parents or other resources. Qalsoon saw a prioritising of education in a context of inter-family dependence for economic survival. She described how education was valued in her Muslim village, but only after the satisfaction of basic needs. The danger of people leaving through education may even have been economically unsafe:

> All your fathers, your forefathers have been with farming and you are expected to continue it no matter how much you study.

Education, to varying degrees, was seen by some of the women to offer personal opportunity for mobility within, rather than away from, the extended family community. In fact many only received extended education because a single sex girls' school was available within the village or town itself. Equally adult education depended on where you lived The meanings for education in relation to gender and place, then, were positioned within a discourse which saw place as an extension of the extended family needs and mobility within place had gendered as well as cultural and economic boundaries. The nature of extended family place, however, was very different between rural and urban communities, with an expectation that rurality also implied economic insecurity.

As a result of these realities, education and learning were located in certain kinds of place and in certain contexts. The influence of time and economic progress, however, on women's education has had dramatic effects on the dominant cultural discourse as well as the women's own discourse positions.

Time and effects of time on gender and education

In the interviews there was a noticeable link between year of marriage and length of time spent in education, which correlated with increasing availability of schools and colleges in Asian villages over the last five years. Nevertheless education in this country was sometimes a hard fought battle for those wives who lived with their in-laws.

One tutor, Rahima, explained the clash of legitimated discourses between generations. She felt that the older generation of in-laws had often remained in a time warp of values which were legitimate in their country of origin for their generation, but as a result of not living through recent attitude changes abroad, they often came into conflict with recently arrived, new generation wives. This perception exemplifies Foucault's notion of historicity as constructed logic which is sustained at any point in time through objectified assertions of truth and systems of power relations between different groups. So for the older women who had been part of that earlier discourse the sense of oppression perceived by the later, younger arrivals was displaced by the legitimating function of upholding culturally valued roles. Foucault describes this as a form of self surveillance which allows dominant discourses to claim authority over people's subjectivity. In these cases women often reconstruct their power status by being experts in doing what their inscribed role expects (Skeggs 1988). So for Shazir, living in this country for 18 years, her extended, inter-generational family roles were accepted as restrictive, but not a burden. Sughra, however, having arrived

only recently, resented her in-laws' restrictions which were in sharp contrast to her own family's attitudes:

> I was leading such a free life in Pakistan. I was earning, I could spend it or do whatever I wanted ... I write to my parents and say never get any of the other daughters married off to somebody in England. (Sughra).

All these aspects of time, place and space are intermingled with cultural and religious discourses, which women traditionally have a responsibility to uphold and disseminate (Afshar 1994). It was only when discourses from India or Pakistan were different from the present English experience, that the women began to question their gender status. But there is a significant discourse feature to remember in discussions of gender power relations here. Although Sughra bemoaned her experience in England she was not against the principles which underpinned her family status. It is this mixture of gender, culture and religion which places the women's perceptions of education on a discourse plane which is simply bypassed as deviant and 'other' by Western, institutional language. This is particularly so regarding the women's discourse relationship with 'community'.

Culture, religion education and gender

> The most important thing was faith and the second most important thing was living in harmony and living together as a community... we should teach exactly the same things to our children ... and ... education is such an important thing we ought to encourage our children as much as possible. And only then will our children be able to stand on their own two feet. (Shazir).

The oldest interviewee, Shazir, left school at 14 and had been in this country 18 years. She articulately summarised three principal values by which all Muslim communities are expected to abide; that is to have an interrelated sense of religion, community and education. Shazir, however, came from a village where it was neither a common feature for girls to be educated beyond primary school, nor was it a common feature for women to work; but it was expected that women would get married soon, and certainly once they ceased their schooling. Yet Shazir, like 90% of the women interviewed, claimed full support for her education from her father. Indeed in common with the other women's memories, he influenced the next generation:

> My father really influenced me in schooling ... he was of the opinion that my children should study and they should achieve a lot in life. And he never wanted me to be dependent on anybody else, so that's why he encouraged us. (Shazir).

Educational value, however, is intertwined with gendered notions of responsibility for harmony and collective responsibilities which are also inscribed in the women's meaning of independence. As independence alone might lead to a dislocation from the community, religion encourages spiritual community and forms the basis on which all schooling rests:

> Islamic education is the way of life. It's not just a religion - Islam is the purpose of my life. (Suryya).

Unlike the individualistic, self seeking nature of education and achievement promoted within the UK education system, education is seen as a community process, to which a variety of people contribute and in which women have a particular role. As Afshar (1994) points out; 'women are the perceived transmitters of cultural values and identity' (131).

Whilst education was equated with success, this was within a collective, rather than an individual, context. Success in Shaheen's terms, for instance, meant achievement of religious standards and community relationships: 'I think as far as the Pakistani environment is concerned, I've lived according to that'. Educational achievement seemed to depend on the order of priorities placed on fundamental Islamic or Eastern principles which were relevant to the particular contextual needs of communities. As Raana interpreted on behalf of the women she interviewed:

> It's more important to settle in life rather than go out and achieve something because doing it for yourself is so selfish, so why not give somebody what you have to offer in life and that is more worthwhile.

Education, to varying degrees, was seen to offer personal opportunity for mobility within, rather than away from, the extended family community, primarily as a means of returning knowledge and skills to the community (Hartley 1994). These belief systems serve two purposes. They sustain the gender power relationship which places responsibility for carrying forward such religious values with the women. They also represent discourse boundaries which refract, rather than intermesh with Western adult education power-knowledge systems and their discourse strategies for participation (such as publicity leaflets, competition, brochures, mixed sex classes).

Conclusion

There appear to be five main themes in this paper which affected the educational perceptions of the interviewees. Firstly, the social use of space in England represented very different meanings for the women and also depended on their own urban or rural background. Secondly, educational values were seen in the context of community value - with an emphasis on what is learned and in what environment - but also influenced by rapid changes in attitude and

opportunity for each individual. Thirdly adult education in this country was viewed from a changing background of scarcity or recent development in India and Pakistan. This view needs to be seen in the context of the fourth theme - that of cultural change across three generations, with acknowledgement of the particular experience of a generation time warp for people who settled in England without being party to the subsequent changes and developments of their own country. Lastly the learning opportunities for Asian women are exacerbated by Western institutional structures which accommodate only limitedly the practical needs of Asian women. Compared with the collective life from abroad, education in England can be an isolating experience.

In theoretical terms the women's realities represent a continuum of differing expectations which are dependent on historical interaction and changing discourses, but within gendered religious and cultural boundaries. Other comments from the interviews and their role models suggested that discourses can alter as individuals re-invest expectations for themselves. The women nevertheless revealed images of education and lifestyles which positioned them in ways which contrast with, rather than synergise, institutional procedures in this country.

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Searching for the 'Pluriverse': cultural pluralism and the differing dimensions of adult education in the United States

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Adult education within the United States has been consistently concerned with problems of diversity and pluralism. In fact, much of what is today considered the adult education movement of the 1920s and 1930s developed as a reaction to the rather heavy-handed efforts of Americanizers to assimilate immigrants into American culture. The questions posed were simply whether immigrants posed a threat to American culture and conversely how could immigrants from such diverse backgrounds become fully functioning members of an American democracy. This paper will examine the different ways that this question was answered and will begin an exploration of the way Horace Kallen's notion of cultural pluralism became embedded within the very framework of adult education in the period between the Wars.

The period 1880-1910 saw the greatest influx of immigrants into the United States that had ever occurred. Most of the new immigrants were Catholics from southern and eastern European countries. In addition, a sizeable number were Jews. For the first time (although not the last) native-born Americans were concerned with the loss of their solutions were put forward. In fact historian John Higham (1978) has indicated that during much of the period from 1900 to 1924 when immigration was cut off, American public culture was preoccupied with the question of how to deal effectively with the immigrants. By the 1920s three principal positions had emerged on assimilation. The first involved various permutations of a schema of anglo-conformity which entailed that immigrants completely renounce their own cultures and adopt what was considered to be an Anglo-Saxon core. The second approach encompassed many variations of the melting pot thesis. Originally used in a play by Israel Zangwill, the melting pot, at that time, meant a merger between the Anglo-Saxon core and the immigrant groups. This would result in a new American type, which would be a combination of all of the cultures which had added to the mix. This idea of the melting pot however, has become an interesting symbol within American culture. It has come to mean both this new American as well as the complete obliteration of immigrant culture. The third approach was cultural pluralism which envisioned the retention of immigrant culture within a common political framework. While some have seen cultural pluralism as a kind of assimilation, others have presented it as an alternative to assimilation. (Gleason 1964; Gordon 1964; Kazal 1995).

Each of these approaches involved a variant educational formula which would bring about the desired end. While certainly children's education was the focus of most policy debates on this issue, this period is the one incident in American education history where there was vociferous debate about an aspect of adult education as well. At one end of the spectrum were the English language classes offered by the various immigrant groups themselves. Deemed the most effective by a Carnegie Corporation study, these classes taught English with specific reference to the immigrant's own culture and linguistic background. Other classes, offered either by municipalities or in some cases by employers, were taught without regard to either student comfort or their interests and needs. The settlement houses offered programmes which were midway between these, focusing on the provision of basic needs while still respecting what the immigrant brought to the table. Out of the ruins of the Americanization program, the modern American adult education movement was born. It looked at how adults learned and tried to develop more appropriate curricula and methods of teaching. It also advocated moving away from the bureaucratized education of the primary, secondary, and collegiate levels to focus more on the community. In this respect, the work of the cultural pluralists may have had the most profound impact. (Carlson 1987; Higham 1978; McClymer 1982).

Interestingly, cultural pluralism was first developed and put forward by two philosophers who were intimately connected with American adult education: Horace Kallen, a Jewish immigrant who taught at the New School for Social Research and Alain Locke, an African American philosopher affiliated with Howard University, who was very active in organized adult education and was the first black president of the American Association of Adult Education. Both men drew on their own sense of marginality to repudiate the notion of a universal American culture. Each approached the issue from his own cultural perspective and while Kallen is by far the better known, Locke really developed the concept much further, both in terms of adult education and in terms of a philosophy of pluralism.

According to Kallen, he first formulated the idea of cultural pluralism with Locke while they were both studying at Oxford. Years later, Kallen reported that he had been upset by attempts by southern students, also studying at Oxford, to exclude Locke from activities. From that time, Kallen formed a bond with Locke which lasted until the latter's death in 1954

(Kallen 1971). The relationship between Kallen and Locke seems to have been both complex and ambiguous. Recent research indicates that Kallen was not free of racism as his version of his early encounter with Locke would indicate (Sollors 1986).

Kallen first wrote about cultural pluralism as a means of answering both the hysterical cries of the anti-immigrant Americanizers as well as the more sympathetic advocates of the melting pot. A student of William James, Kallen was a Jewish immigrant born in Silesia in 1882 and emigrating to Boston at the age of six. Educated at home by his rabbi father until the truant officers came after him, Kallen grew up deeply ambivalent about his background and religion. By the time he entered Harvard, Kallen was estranged from religion. After Harvard, Kallen spent a year studying at Oxford, returning to study for his doctorate under William James in 1908. He taught briefly at Princeton, but his contract was not renewed and he was made to understand that if they had known he was Jewish he would not have been invited to teach there in the first place. After graduating, Kallen taught at the University of Wisconsin from 1912-1918, when he left because of issues of academic freedom. He then spent a year trying to establish himself as a freelance journalist, but in 1919 he was offered an opportunity to join the experimental New School for Social Research. He stayed at the New School for over fifty years where he taught until his death in 1974.

Kallen's central concerns dealt with the nature of American culture and how to encourage a cooperative spirit which would result in a pluralistic society. Kallen began this quest with his concern for his Jewish roots. Although estranged from his father and his religion, at Harvard Kallen, with the encouragement of literature professor Barrett Wendell, began to develop a more sympathetic approach to Judaism. Influenced by Wendell's insistence of the important contributions of Hebraic civilization to American culture (and seemingly impervious to Wendell's anti-semitism), Kallen reapproached Judaism as a culture, separate from the religion. During the period of his graduate study, 1907- 1911, Kallen strove to develop his idea of Jewish peoplehood. He became a founding member of the Menorah Association, which was dedicated to the promulgation of Jewish culture. He also became an active Zionist, a position which he felt was a natural extension of his developing ideas about Jewish peoplehood. (Klingenstein 1991; Konvitz 1995).

In 1915, Kallen wrote two articles in *The Nation* on his ideas (Kallen 1915a and 1915b) and then expanded these and introduced the term cultural pluralism in *Culture and Democracy* (1924). Building on a Jamesian rejection of universalism, Kallen argued that culture itself needed to become pluralistic. He called for a United States that was a federation of peoples, rather than one unified cultural entity. Kallen made a distinction between a people, without its own unique historically-based culture and a state, which was a civic entity. The United States was a state, but not a nation. It did not have one culture, but many. Explicitly rejecting the rationale of those advocating an Anglo-Saxon core, Kallen went on to state that really this seemingly dominant strain, was but one of many within the orchestra of American culture. No one culture was superior. Although he later abandoned this idea, in 1915 Kallen believed that one's ethnic background was unchangeable. 'Jews or Poles or Anglo-Saxons, in order to cease being Jews or Poles or Anglo-Saxons would have to cease to be.' (Kallen 1915b, 220).

After 1924, Kallen did not explicitly address the issues relating to cultural pluralism again, until the 1950s (Kallen 1956), but he continued to deal with the implications of his vision of pluralism. Much of his writing on education in general and Jewish education in particular, as well as questions concerning the nature of culture and of cooperation, dealt with his theme of orchestration and pluralism. For Kallen, individuals were only truly human in their cooperative, voluntary efforts. Just as he envisioned the United States as a pluriverse or a combination of the many truths rather than the commitment to one, so too Kallen saw education as really many different things, with no one correct way. In *Education, the Machine and the Worker*, Kallen began his critique of the contemporary boom in adult education. In this case, he focused on the labor colleges, castigating them for their failure to truly liberate the worker. They had not given the workers the tools to wrest control of the workplace from management, but rather had focused on the liberal arts, which Kallen saw as only serving '... to perpetuate the status quo' (1925, 69).

Yet Kallen did not embrace vocational training either. Another theme throughout his life was his perception that organized education failed because it continued to separate vocational and liberal education. The schools themselves had become mere handmaidens to industry, teaching neither inquiry or reflection, but rather conformity.

> The school system is a labor factory. It turns out duly qualified and standardized labor power for the labor market. (1925, 28)

This was a theme to which Kallen consistently adhered. In 1962, writing of the proposed Manpower Development and Training Act, Kallen criticized its narrow emphasis on training:

> We ought to try to prevent that money being spent on merely 'vocational reeducation', but to involve the new vocational learning with both the liberating and responsible purposes we assume adult education should serve. (May 31, 1962)

For Kallen the theme of adult education as a liberating force was important and went back to at least 1928 when he wrote about the problems of adult education for an early issue of the *Journal of Adult Education* edited by Eduard Lindeman. Adult education had not lived up to its potential because it had been taken over by hucksters who tried to profit by the desire of others to better themselves. Education was too often treated as a product. People were persuaded to 'buy' what they did not really want, only to drop out.

> Indeed, very far from a majority of the customers of those who sell adult education complete the courses they begin; so few, in fact, as to make the inference inevitable that the people have only been persuaded into believing that they want what they buy, but do not really want it. (1928, 40).

Kallen combined his concerns about education and his commitment to cultural pluralism in *The Education of Free Men: An Essay Toward a Philosophy of Education for Americans*. Here Kallen promoted diversity as integral to 'civilized' culture and proposed that education should function as the bridge between them: 'Education is civilization and civilization is hyphenation' (1949, 183).

While Kallen viewed education as the link between diversity and civilization, this link was not traditional education's fragmented collection of specialized knowledge. Knowledge itself was a diverse enterprise. For that reason, Kallen offered a strong critique in 1946 of the recently disseminated Harvard Plan, which proposed a restructuring of the college curriculum and an emphasis on general education courses. Kallen disagreed with the Harvard Plan's focus on the humanities, stating instead that the humanities should 'no longer [be] allowed to monopolize education.' For Kallen, education encompassed more than received content; it entailed a continuous reshaping of the knowledge base leading to increased understanding and interdependence (1946, 254).

Throughout his career, Kallen continued to tie the possibilities for adult education very firmly to his disenchantment with traditional educational institutions. In a letter to Alexander Liveright, Kallen, then almost eighty years old, decried 'the infection of adult education by the specialization and professionalism' dominating 'our educational establishment' (Kallen, Feb 27, 1961). To combat stultifying professionalization, Kallen encouraged adult educators to foster an 'amateur spirit' based on the adult's capacity for reinvention, growth, and maturity (Kallen 1962). He proposed this spirit of critical inquiry and flexibility of mind as the antidote to traditional education which prepared adults only for superficial pursuits. By encouraging the development of the amateur, versus the professional spirit, and emphasizing the liberation of the adult learner, Kallen believed that adult education could play a crucial role in democratic society. In an essay originally prepared in 1960 for the Commission of Professors of Adult Education, Kallen depicted adult education as '... the latest, the most consequential phase of the development of education as the most characteristic institution of the country's cultural economy' (1962, x).

Throughout all of his writing on education, Kallen remained convinced of the importance of culture to social change. Yet he deliberately eschewed a psychological approach to education:

> I prefer the social philosophy rather than the 'psychology of adult learning.' ..., I have been finding that nothing is so likely to obstruct teachers and leaders as preoccupation with 'psychology.' The primary problem is a problem in human relations, not unlike that between a doctor and his patients. The patient has to be treated as an equal and in the light of his beliefs and wants, regardless of what doctrines the doctor may have about it. (Kallen, April 2, 1940).

In many ways, Kallen's critiques resonate with modern concerns. His interests encompassed much of adult education, yet he always firmly stayed outside of organized adult education, despite his connections to many of the leading adult education thinkers of the time, including Alain Locke, Eduard Lindeman, and Everett Dean Martin. Unlike many of the others, Kallen did not try to demarcate a unique rather for adult education, rather he celebrated its diversity as a possibly for liberation. Indeed, cultural pluralism laid the foundation for his thinking about adult education, although his views, like much of American adult education, were abstract and somewhat grandiose. Kallen's defense of his liberal ideal of freedom and liberation did not take into account actual power relationships or what it may really take to change a system. Kallen's failure may have been in viewing education by itself as sufficient for liberation. Despite his at times almost post-modern critique of education, Kallen celebrated both the possibility of human reason and the plurality of values that went into each individual's reasoning. This kind of thinking led

Philip Gleason (1980) to note that despite the fact that Kallen is known as a Jamesian pragmatist, his writing are best explained if he is viewed as 'an optimistic idealist rather than a pragmatist.' (44).

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Learning the business of business: action learning and business incubation

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Introduction

To be self-employed and own a business is a dream many people seek to make a reality. Yet, statistics indicate that 70% to 80% of small businesses fail within the first two years of commencement. This failure rate preoccupies governments and business councils who formulate policies which promote training courses as a solution to this situation, despite the fact that much of the literature indicates that small business operators do not respond well to this kind of training.

For many professions, the gateway to successful performance entails some form of on-the-job training. It seems that with the exception of learning the ropes in the environment of a family business, the opportunities for on-the-job training in small business are few and far between. Business Incubators (BIs) provide such an opportunity and are proving to be successful learning environments in many countries.

In keeping with the conference theme, this paper seeks to outline some of the developments and practices in the BI industry in Australia and overseas and to explore the application of action learning principles as a new framework for BI development activities. It is our contention that the industry has been participating in an action learning approach perhaps unwittingly. We therefore believe that an examination of BI practice viewed from an action learning perspective may open up another avenue (new framework) for the industry to view and enhance its role.

There is a wealth of literature on action learning in the fields of management and business. Our literature search, whilst not exhaustive, found nothing that made the connection between BIs and action learning. In writing this paper we have drawn on unpublished reports, conference proceedings and on personal experiences in managing and advising BIs in Australia and in observing BIs overseas.

Background, definition and general characteristics of BIs

Business incubators are both a facility and a method of new enterprise development. They appeared in the late 70s and early 1980s in the USA and UK, primarily to foster the growth and survival of local entrepreneurial activity, particularly new start businesses. There have also been other reasons for their establishment. In essence they provide people wishing to start a business with: affordable accommodation on a flexible basis (shared facilities, sponsorship of a venue and flexible arrangements on floor space use, generally mean that incubators offer reduced overheads); shared business support services such as secretarial, communications technology, reception, business address, photocopying and fax services, provided by core staff who are supervised by a business manager; on-site advice including counselling, mentoring and facilitation; skills development opportunities both structured and unstructured/informal; an entrepreneurial environment that adds value to tenant businesses. In practical terms, strategies to achieve this are the creation of networking opportunities, appropriate business referral, joint business opportunities and modelling possibilities.

What differentiates BIs from shared real estate facilities is the philosophy and practice they embody. In broad terms, they attempt to address the loneliness and isolation entrepreneurs can feel starting a business. In practice, this is achieved through the building of key relationships with incubator staff, other tenants and the incubator's broader community network. The key objective is to ensure survival for new start businesses to a point at which they are ready to graduate to the general real estate market. Another point worth noting is that business incubators are not just a facility housing a collection of individual enterprises, it is possible to see them as a type of organisation (Flynn 1995).

Relationship between BI practice and principles underlying action learning

Action learning is described as 'the development of self by the mutual support of equals' (Revans 1982). Although it has evolved as a process closely related to management development its usefulness as a learning methodology is not limited to this context. In this section we outline three sets of principles which underpin action learning - principles of adult learning, learning as a social process and the needs and motivations of managers - as set out by Ballantyne, Bruce and Packer (1993). We go on to explore the extent to which these principles align with BI practice.

Adult learning principles

Adult learners are: self-directed, come with experience, are ready to learn when they need to perform more effectively in some aspect of their lives and learn in order to perform a task, solve a problem or live in a more satisfying way (Knowles 1985).

It is somewhat self-evident that the principles of adult learning will apply to incubator tenants who are

adults. Our observation and reading suggests that the structured 'training' programs of incubators follow much more conventional lock-step, sessional approaches delivered by expert 'presenters'. Our experience is that these have neither proved sustainable nor popular with tenants. Further, we have anecdotal evidence that an unfortunate consequence of attaching BIs to tertiary institutions is that the institution frequently interprets the BI in more traditional educational terms. This approach can translate into poor facility design, a non-business like approach with tenants or the BIs activities being viewed as simply a funnel for the institution's mainstream education offerings. We believe there is clear scope for improvement here.

Learning as a social process and the incubator environment

Participants learn with and from each other (Revans 1991) and the learning process of action-reflection-understanding is more effective when it takes place in the company of others who are involved in a similar exercise (Boddy 1981). The reinforcement of this learning in a social context we see as a major strength of BIs relative to other business development approaches. In this regard, inherent in the design of business incubators has been the notion of co-location and shared facilities.

The co-location of tenants in the same BI facility offers physical proximity and coincidental opportunities for tenant interaction. Our observations and those of Flynn (1995) suggest that tenants learn from each other - competitively, combatively and cooperatively. Co-location also leads to coincidental interaction with BI staff and the action and review cycle occurs when BI tenants begin to observe and interact with each other. Flynn refers to this process as a two cycle process (we interpret Flynn's two cycle process to be a cyclic process of action and review), the key point of Flynn's two cycle process being learning outcomes (which we equate with understanding). Taken further, we see it as an iterative, reinforcing process. A problem here is that the reinforcing process can just as easily reinforce negative as well as positive experience and outcomes for the individual. A proprietor working from the relative professional isolation of a home-based business in theory has less scope for reflection based on interaction with others to 'test' his/her derived 'understandings' from experience, whereas an incubator has this interactive idea built into its raison d'être.

Another aspect of the social process is that small group processes provide encouragement, support, stimulation, access to information and resources (Prideaux and Ford 1988). Our observation is that this does not occur on a predictable, planned systematic basis in Australian BIs. It does however occur where tenants decide to work on joint venture activities and via needs-based counselling support provided by BI staff. We suspect some systematic action learning processes could appropriately fit here, although how this would operate in practice is more problematic and beyond the scope of this brief paper.

External factors such as social interaction and cultural practices have a major impact on the process of learning (Billett 1992). Incubators attempt to capitalise on social interaction to create coincidental synergistic effects and build new relationships for tenant businesses - in current business jargon 'networking opportunities'. BIs are frequently seen as contributing to the reduction of loneliness and fear associated with establishing a new start business (self-employment). While there have been some unsuccessful attempts at establishing BIs in Australia with cultural objectives, our experience suggests that cultural diversity can flourish in BIs without intervention, the common culture being that of business practice and the economic system.

Needs and motivations of managers/incubator tenants

The literature on action learning often focuses on the perspective of managers in organisations. We use the term managers here to refer to employees in an organisation and the term tenants (also managers) to refer to BI participants.

Clearly, the difference in context for managers and tenants with regard to needs and motivation is the difference between being an employee or self-employed. A primary differential in this context, is the increased degree of personal risk that a self-employed person may face relative to a manager who is an employee.

In terms of needs and motivation, managers are curious to know how other managers work and they learn when they are motivated to achieve something (Casey 1991). Translating this to the BI setting, tenants are curious about how other tenants work and deal with the demands of business. The co-location of tenants in a BI again works to reinforce opportunities for tenants to observe at close hand, on a daily basis, how other new business starters cope. Further, a primary, at times all consuming, motivation of tenants is the desire to create a successful business.

Mumford (1991) sees that managers are more likely to participate and benefit from learning processes when they are geared to current organisational needs/problems that the managers themselves see as significant. Our observation is that BI tenants participate in learning activities when they see direct benefits to their businesses. This is

strengthened further by the fact that the tenant's issues are drawn from concrete experience rather than theory. This fits well with Braddick and Casey's (1981) observation of the preference by managers to learn based on concrete experience.

Tenants are highly motivated to learn when faced with a business challenge or issue to resolve. Often, for them these could relate to critical issues of success or failure. As an extension to this point, we believe that BIs may be in a good position to benefit from Revans (1983) observation that risk increases learning. It should also be noted that although incubators can reduce the risk of business failure, the actual risk of failure is as real as it is for any business.

Finally, the application of self-managed approaches to action learning (Prideaux and Ford 1988) is highly relevant to the incubator environment. 'Self-directedness' is a necessary precursor to being self-employed. Incubators allow tenants (the learners) to 'do their own thing'. Typically only the physical environment of tenants and business systems of an incubator are predictable in structure. The nature of counselling, mentoring and learning situations are much less so. In Australia, attempts made by BI staff to be more interventionist in a systematic and planned way haven't worked effectively - it has also proved to be more resource intensive and expensive.

BI approaches to skills development and entrepreneurial training needs

In the broad brush comparison above, considerable confluence in the practice of BIs and the principles of action learning seem to emerge. In one sense, this is not surprising given the history of the development of action learning and BIs. Both developed as a response to real needs and real situations and BIs have been flagged as a very practical response to the needs of emerging small firms and structural shifts in employment demand.

Literature on BI approaches to entrepreneurial training needs may however cloud the links to action learning that we believe are inherent in their structure, for example, Topsom, Finney and Whelan (1995) in a report on networked incubation comments on best practice concerning entrepreneurial training in eleven incubators across the USA, France and the UK. Topsom's description of each of the eleven incubators' to training, with a couple of approaches exceptions, suggests a reliance on linkages to main stream institutional courses. For example, his description of the Austin Technology Incubator's approach suggests a heavy reliance on courses through the UT-Austin and associated colleges.

One notable exception is Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute Incubator Program (USA) - there, selected tenants meet monthly with members of the incubator advisory board. This group meets regularly with the company and 'Companies should be prepared to discuss the challenges they face . The product of these sessions is informal advice and suggestions. However the overarching goal is to educate entrepreneurs so that they will begin to think critically about their company' (Topsom *et al* 1995).

The other main exception evident in Topsom's work is the Lyons Business Incubator (France). Their Entrepreneurs Programme includes individually tailored advice and mentoring by an experienced company manager.

Topsom also describes the SPEDD Inc. experience (Pittsburgh, USA). Its approach to training has a much more home grown feel to it and seems less reliant on tertiary course linkages. However Topsom describes it as being highly interventionist and notes that continued tenancy in the BI is contingent on participation in the programme - so much for gearing learning to the learners immediate perceived needs.

Clearly, there is some variance between the more generally described practice of BIs above and the reports of Topsom. However, what is only touched on in Topsom's work is the importance of the key relationships between tenants, incubator managers and staff and the part played by other tenants in the incubator as a learning environment. Certainly the largest and arguably the leading incubators in Australia are the Canberra Business Centres. Exit surveys of their tenants frequently reinforce the significance of the informal issues-driven support they received from other tenants and incubator staff in the corridors, toilets and tea rooms. The significance of this trend is also reported in much of the work of the National Business Incubator Association (USA).

Conclusions on action learning and business incubators

At this early stage of exploration of this topic it does seem as though there is some significant alignment between BI practice and the underlying principles of action learning. Further, as long term adult educators with current experience in the BI industry, we believe that much BI practice places emphasis on learning rather than training (despite the 'bolt-on' inclusion of conventional training approaches with some incubators). To this end, we suggest that the brief analysis above sets the foundation for an action learning framework to be applied to BIs.

At this stage we are also inclined to the view that BIs may in fact be a different embodiment of action learning processes. Questions remain about exactly what components and methods of more conventionally recognised action learning approaches might successfully transpose to the BI context. Certainly the Renssellaer experience referenced earlier suggests the

formation of a more conventional set approach. Of course a key difficulty is the fact that many BIs deal initially with firms that start life as sole traders and therefore not a natural set. In this context the role of fellow tenants and BI staff in forming formal and informal sounding boards for reflective set-like activity is vital.

Finally, we see scope to build on Flynn's work and explore in another direction BIs as learning organisations.

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How did you get here?

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Wheels, feet, roads, railway lines? From north, south, east or west? Our journeys here are likely to be diverse. Far more diverse are the routes we have taken in our lives to arrive at this moment and the SCUTREA Conference. How did you get into adult education in the first place? Were you initially a student? (Are you now?) What paths of study, work, happen-chance, serendipity led you here? If, like most people at the SCUTREA Conference, you have paid work, did you hear about your first job in this field at a party, on a bus, from a tutor, or over a meal with friends? Did you seek out work in adult education - or did it seem to seek you out?

My research (for a doctoral thesis at the University of Kent at Canterbury) explores the career patterns of women who are current or former tutors in adult education in universities, colleges, adult education services and the voluntary sector. With the help of 177 women who have completed questionnaires on their working lives in this field, I am in the process of discovering routes into, journeys within, and paths out of part-time adult education teaching, including the high and low points, the multiple responsibilities and the diversity of roles and experiences that women part-time workers construct. In examining these complex career patters, I explore the use of the quilt metaphor as a positive model for women's careers, a metaphor that embraces complexity and change.

One respondent notes, 'I wouldn't call it a career, that denotes responsibility, hierarchy. I'd call it a *very* interesting life'. In this workshop, we will share aspects of our common and uncommon life histories in, and before, adult education - swapping selected highlights (and if you wish, low lights) of our 'interesting lives'. We will use a series of questions - some light-hearted, some serious - on career paths, chance events, education and other variables to devise (and glue) our own 'career quilts'. Response to these questions will be completely optional - share what you will, and enjoy the construction of your own and others' quilts!

At this workshop and elsewhere at the beginning of the Conference, there will be the opportunity to complete a short questionnaire on careers, devised by Pam Coare, Julia Dinsdale and Rena Felt of the University of Sussex; they will use the results to construct a wall installation entitled *Offering you a lifelife*. The installation, drawing on my research on career development and the quilt metaphor, will present an overview of the adult education career routes of conference participants, a large-scale, many-threaded image of the diversity and personal development that has brought each of us to the Conference.

Fitness for purpose in continuing professional education - whose purpose?

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Introduction

In Australia the concept of quality in education has been interpreted primarily from a managerialist and economic rationalist perspective. This has alienated many educators. Quality has been defined in terms of, inter alia, *fitness for purpose*. Fitness for purpose, under other names, has been fundamental to practitioners and researchers in adult education for many years. It pervades the functions of planning, management and teaching as well as the understanding of adults as learners.

Adult educators have called for researchers, practitioners and managers to provide clearer articulation of the complexity of adult education provision. This paper argues that the way forward, to a wider participation by adult educators in policy development and educational management, is to develop a means of articulating fundamental educational understandings of issues ('fitness for purpose' in this study) in a way in which they can be included in and have influence on the management of adult education. The paper will describe a research methodology which combines subjectivity and reflexivity but is itself quantitative. Its use within a group of professionals in a continuing professional education (CPE) context will be used to illustrate the contribution that such techniques can make in understanding educational issues.

Adult education context in Australia

In Australia, education - and particularly higher education and adult education - has been required to make significant contributions to improved international competitiveness and to conform to the 'training reform agenda'. This has forced decision making into a 'business' mindset where notions of quality and efficiency dominate and translate to a simplistic understanding of education in economic terms. Decisions made in this context are not necessarily taken from the point of view of the learner - who may be drawn from a wide range of settings with diverse purposes for engaging in learning experiences. In general, these decisions have alienated educators across all fields and prompted reactions of concern. Crombie and Whyte (1995,101) warn of difficulties faced by adult educators '... when the whole domain of post-compulsory education and training is for the time being dominated by economic imperatives ...'.

Foley (1996, 4) calls for adult educators to take on the advocacy of the diversity of our field and its vital interest in emancipation and social change: 'Adult educators in general need to become more critical and active advocates for their field by educating politicians, policy makers and bureaucrats about the complexities and difficulties of adult education.' What is required is an articulation of the issues in adult education so those in decision-making positions will come, over time, to appreciate the traditions, approaches and complexities of adult education which make it inappropriate to use a simple directive approach to its management. This advocacy can be assisted by the presentation of issues through quantitative models which express understandings of particular educational settings.

The tradition of research in adult and continuing education has been from a qualitative or interpretive focus. Indeed Field (1991, 9) asserts that in adult education ' ... qualitative methodologies are generally preferred over quantitative, which are seen as "reductive" and "positivistic"'. This approach to research and scholarly activity is far too prescriptive. Models presented with numerical measures can be of great value in assisting us, and those who make decisions about our work, understand some of the complexities involved.

Fitness for purpose and quality in education

Fitness for purpose is a key component of the quality movement's approach. Quality is defined by the International Standards Organisation (ISO) as 'The totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs.' (ISO 8402). West-Burnham and Davies (1994) consider the question of defining quality in education. They conclude that the task is difficult but do propose five areas where quality is valid in education - and fitness for purpose is central to their argument. This paper focuses on the fitness for purpose theme as an extension of the well established concept of 'needs' in education.

Brookfield (1986, 221) criticises the traditional concept of needs in adult education settings as the 'premature ultimate' and argues that it is value laden. He finds difficulty with defining needs as either the felt needs of learners or the specified needs of educators and argues that true collaboration on needs in adult education in many settings is problematic. His arguments are at the heart of the dilemma of educational management in a quality context - that is, satisfying needs by providing education fit for the purpose in a particular context. To Brookfield, needs prescribed by educators or managers are autocratic and

inappropriate in adult education, and meeting the felt needs of learners invites a consumerist approach to learning. Brookfield asserts that an aim of education not fulfilled by this consumerist approach is to change what learners want and to develop goals in learners which they could not previously imagine. This highlights the difficulty of articulating a consensus notion of needs and the necessity to establish a process for collecting and communicating the purposes of a particular educational setting.

Adult educators have used the concept of fitness for purpose as the basis for one of the steps in planning models for decades. Tyler (1949) introduced a program development model which forms the basis for much adult education planning today. His four stage model begins with the identification of educational purposes or objectives. He suggests that the source of educational objectives should be the learners, contemporary life, the philosophy of the institution and the educator, and the subject matter experts. Houle (1972) and Knowles (1980) focused Tyler's model on the adult learner. Houle emphasised the importance of the learner over subject matter and Knowles placed more weight on creating a learning environment which meets the particular needs of adult learners.

The Tylerian-based models and more recent developments have application in CPE. For example Kolb (1984) describes a learning cycle, Heron (1989) group processes and Nowlen (1988) a *performance* model. Each of these is in common use by practitioners in their teaching and by policy makers in their planning for education. However, these models are deficient in two areas of planning for fitness for purpose in adult education provision.

First, while the models are used to great effect by individual practitioners and produce excellent teaching programmes, they do not provide mechanisms for all interested parties to provide collaboration on input to define the purposes of a particular educational undertaking. Second, the models do not provide a means of communicating their content and intention to a wider audience. Introduction of these two elements into a model for educational purposes is a first step in allowing adult educators to articulate the purposes of their programming to a wider and potentially more influential audience.

Towards a model for articulating the purposes of educational activity

In Australia, Foley (1996) and Brennan (1993) have called for the articulation to a wider audience of the complexity of adult education as a matter of urgency. However, there are few models in adult education which are easily digested by persons not familiar with the literature. The literature in adult education is dominated by a post-modern influence of multiple perspectives and individual freedom to such an extent that it is problematic to construct any overall comprehension for an individual as there is no place for universality in this discourse. But this idea is too abstract for practitioners and learners who must respond to the practical realities of programme delivery. Critical theory has emerged as a powerful influence in adult education. Gibson (1986) argues that critical theory claims to provide enlightenment of actual conditions of social life through disclosure of the true interests of groups and individuals. Methods for such disclosure are not readily forthcoming.

What is proposed here follows on the work of Saaty (1980, 1986) and Saaty and Vargas (1991) in modelling and describing complex situations and the application of this work to the field of education by Berrell and Smith (1994, 1996). The Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) is a technique which attempts to capture a picture of the way an individual or group perceives a complex problem and the relationship between elements in that problem. It is an integrated methodology which takes account of the many possible elements, interactions and even biases that exist in a complex situation. It provides a ratio scale that indicates the perceived relative importance of elements. The technique combines a systems approach - in the construction of the situation as a hierarchy, and a deductive approach - in the use of paired comparisons to measure and rank the relative importance of elements within the system.

Saaty argues that the AHP does not adopt either a purely logical positivist approach nor a purely interpretive approach. Rather it combines the two approaches in that it allows the interpretation of a situation from the perspective of the observer applying both subjective judgements and logical interpretation. The end result is thus an amalgamation of logic and intuitive understanding of the problem from the participant's point of view. The technique is iterative and introduces the element of reflexivity into the research situation. Respondents can be provided with feedback and given the opportunity to alter responses in the light of analysed results.

A detailed exposition of the AHP is given by Saaty (1980) in which both the mathematical and psychological foundations of the technique are described. The AHP provides an opportunity to assist in the hermeneutical approach for 'a variety of disciplines to get multiple explanations for phenomena...' described by Levin and Clowes (1991, 4). The technique involves the capturing of understandings of a situation and recording them for communication. It thus provides a powerful means to articulate the complexity of adult education issues which is participative.

Case study

The study used here is taken from an exercise in the field of CPE with a (technical) professional association. Members of the education committee of the association participated in a group session for the purpose of capturing understanding of the association's CPE activities. An established model for presenting goals in CPE has been adapted for use with the AHP to provide a case study in articulating goals for education and linking those to the concept of fitness for purpose.

Scanlan (1985) proposed a model for framing the goals of CPE based on a survey of prevailing values, beliefs and premises in the literature in the field. He proposed nine perspectives or orientations which are operative in the field of CPE. These perspectives were presented as a matrix with one dimension being the target groups or beneficiaries of CPE and the other dimension as the possible approaches to CPE. An adaptation of the model (with AHP weightings) is shown in Table 1.

The weightings shown on the model are the ratio scales produced by the application of the AHP on this model in a manner described by Smith (1995). The judgements of the education committee on their understanding of the CPE situation prevailing in their association at the time were used as inputs to the AHP. The basis of the AHP is pairwise comparison of the relative importance of elements (on a verbal scale). Questions of the type - 'In the context of *fostering growth*, rate your perception of the relative importance of the outcomes for the *individual* and the *delivery system in CPE* for your profession'. The judgements are synthesised to form a ratio scale which represent the understanding of the situation by the participants.

Table 1 - Goal Orientations Model of CPE - adapted from Scanlan (1985)

	Remediating Deficiencies	**Fostering Growth**	**Facilitating Change**	
Individual	*Orientation 1* Updating/ Competency Assurance **0.25**	*Orientation 2* Individual growth **0.06**	*Orientation 3* Professional reorientation **0.12**	**Total:** Individual **0.43**
Organisation/ Profession	*Orientation 4* Employee training **0.07**	*Orientation 5* Employee education **0.07**	*Orientation 6* Organisational development **0.13**	**Total:** Organisation **0.27**
System	*Orientation 7* Systems deficit **0.10**	*Orientation 8* Systems improvement **0.05**	*Orientation 9* Systems reform **0.15**	**Total:** System **0.30**
	Total: Remediating Deficiencies **0.42**	**Total:** Fostering Growth **0.18**	**Total:** Facilitating Change **0.40**	

Interpreting the model

Examination of the weightings in the completed model represented here can be used to draw several conclusions about the understanding of CPE in the particular context from the point of view of the education committee. Of course a more complete study would include data from the association membership, clients and government authorities.

Examinations of the totals for beneficiaries of CPE (right column) indicates that the focus is on the individual (43%) with the system and organisation judged as of almost equal importance. This would indicate that the education committee saw that CPE, while mainly concentrated on serving the needs of association membership, has important outcomes for the profession and for the system (regulatory, societal and environmental) in which the profession operates. This observation alone was important to the committee as there had been a vigorous debate amongst members

of the association regarding the relevance of including non-technical topics in their CPE.

The totals for approaches to education (bottom row) indicate a result which was surprising for the committee. It shows that they regarded 'facilitating change' to be almost as important as the traditional 'remediating deficiencies' approach to CPE programming. This revealed a previously 'hidden' imperative to reform the whole approach of the profession through CPE delivery which challenged and 'transformed' participants.

The weightings in each of the nine orientations provide a finer measure of the judgements in terms of the purposes of CPE for the profession. For example Orientation 1 has the highest weighting indicating that programming was most heavily targetted at the traditional individual update approach. The next highest weighting was Orientation 9 indicating that CPE provision was targetted at changing the system in which the profession operated. This approach is a sophisticated one and would no doubt surprise many who perceive this profession as staid and conservative.

Further analysis of the model is possible as is the opportunity for participants to revisit the decision making process in the light of the information gained in the first examination.

Conclusion

The case study presented demonstrates that it is possible to present a model which includes many of the issues in adult education planning from a fitness for purpose point of view. Through the use of an established model in education combined with an innovative mathematical modelling process it is possible to build a realistic quantitative framework for articulating the purposes for a particular educational activity.

In a quality context this approach increases the likelihood that any resulting educational programming is 'fit for the purpose' for which it is intended. In addition, the approach satisfies the demand for articulation of the complexity of adult education for the purposes of alerting a wider audience that a simplistic approach to quality in education provision is inappropriate.

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Local government reorganisation: its impact on adult education

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In 1975 two events, significant for Scottish continuing education, occurred: the implementation of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, which introduced local authorities at district and regional levels, and the presentation of a report, *Adult Education The Challenge of Change*, under the chairmanship of Professor K J W Alexander, dealing with leisure courses of an educational, but not vocational, nature. Both affected the existing arrangements for post-compulsory education provided by local authorities, and have continued to do so during the last twenty-one years. That there is the possibility of further major changes to the present provision of leisure learning is the result of the recent reorganisation of local government in April 1996, which has reintroduced a unitary system.

Traditionally, the relationship between Scottish university extra-mural provision and local authority finance has been close, as both the discretionary and statutory provision of further education in Scotland has been the responsibility of local authorities as defined in the Education (Scotland) Acts. Unlike the extra-mural departments of English and Welsh universities, which were recognised as responsible bodies for the delivery of adult education in 1924 and received direct government funding for staffing and teaching costs, Scottish universities have had to rely on the support and collaboration of the local education authorities to access funding through joint committees. Although such committees were established in the 1920s at some Scottish universities enabling them to bid for finance, post-war legislation and reports encouraged greater co-operation. The appointment of university extra-mural staff and the revivification of the committees with membership from the local authorities and other adult educational organisations promoted greater availability of university adult education classes, assisted from 1959 by grant aid from the Scottish Education Department (SED) for the administrative costs of university involvement.

The University of Dundee Extra-Mural Committee for Adult Education was set up in 1968 by the reconstitution of the original University of St Andrews Committee established in 1962. Started by a part-time appointment in 1956 (full-time in 1963) at University College, Dundee, the Extra-Mural Department with one member of academic staff (increasing to two shortly afterwards in 1969) was retained after the establishment of the University in 1967, academic salaries being funded by the University from its 'general education expenditure', secretarial assistance by the SED, with the local education authorities setting the level of student fees, setting the level and paying tutors' fees and providing accommodation. Prior to local government reorganisation in 1975, the Department worked, through the Committee, with five authorities - Dundee, Angus, Perth and Kinross-shire, Clackmannanshire and Fife - providing classes at further education centres. Since 1975, the University has been located in an area administered by Tayside Regional Council at first-tier level, and by Dundee, Perth and Kinross, and Angus at a second tier of district council government. The Extra-Mural Committee was reconstituted to reflect these changes and consisted of six university representatives, four members nominated by the Regional Education Authority (one, at least, being an elected member), the Director of Education, and an officer nominated by him, five representatives from local colleges, two from the Workers' Educational Association, one from the Open University, up to four co-opted members, which included representatives from the City Museum, the Regional Recreation Department, the British Council and local radio, with an assessor from the Scottish Education Department. Chaired by a university representative with the Vice-Chairman a representative of the Education Authority (elected annually), the Committee's objective was adult education provision, particularly within Tayside, to be carried out directly by the Committee and in co-operation with the Regional Education Authority, and voluntary bodies. It approved the programmes of work supported by Regional funding, acted as a funding administrator, and as a forum for communication between various educational institutions, both local and national, with standing agenda items for the Open University and the WEA.

One of the Committee's early tasks was a consideration of the Alexander Report, which had recommended, *inter alia*, that adult education, with community and youth work, should be seen as an aspect of community education and should remain the statutory responsibility of local education authorities. The Committee, recognising the concept of community education and a community education service, acknowledged that part of the existing extra-mural provision fell within that service as a contribution to the wider education of adults, catering both for individual interests and community needs. It indicated a willingness to be involved in schemes to attract non-participants and to participate in training for community education workers. However, these and other supported recommendations were made in the light of the impending expenditure cuts on education to be implemented by the Regional Council.

These restrictions on local government spending resulted in considerable changes for the Extra-Mural Department. Government instructions to reduce expenditure, coupled with sizeable increases in further

education part-time tutors' fees to which extra-mural fees had been linked in 1979, provoked an emergency met by the introduction of new arrangements. To maintain its statutory obligation and at the existing level, and implement salary increases within the budget, the Regional Council agreed to transfer the major part of its programme, a programme drawn up by the Committee in consultation with the principals of the Community Education Centres, to a self-financing basis from January 1980. Consequently, it withdrew all financial and administrative support from classes arranged by the Department as the executive agency of the joint Committee. For the Committee, this represented a major change of educational policy, from a public service to a marketable commodity of even more limited appeal, a change which not only ran counter to the Alexander Report, but which allowed any organisation to provide classes. With no support in cash or kind from the Regional Council, a situation unique in Scotland, the nature of the partnership altered, although membership of the Committee remained the same. Such budgetary cuts made throughout Scotland resulted in major local discrepancies and in Tayside no financial assistance was given by the Regional Council between 1980 and 1982, although grant aid for administrative costs was restored on the acceptance of reciprocal free access to premises in 1982. However, the old arrangements had been replaced and the Department remained responsible for the arrangements and provision of its classes.

Paradoxically, as it accompanied government restrictions on university finance, the lack of external support was balanced by the emergence of interest in continuing education within universities because of the predicted decline in undergraduate numbers. Funding arrangements began to alter, the SED informing the Department that for 1986-87 its grant would be cut by more than half and would then cease, such cuts being necessary to fund the new PICKUP schemes. Bids for this funding and for University Funding Council monies were made and in 1991 direct funding from London ensued. As the Committee was no longer required, it was replaced by the Advisory Group on Liberal Adult Education and Access with similar representation, chaired by the Regional Director of Education, who was elected unanimously. Primarily acting as an area forum, it reported, along with the Advisory Group on Continuing Vocational Education, to the Senate Continuing Education Committee. Currently, its successor is being constituted.

Throughout the last twenty years the University and the Regional Education Committee have been linked by finance, by course provision, by training for Regional employees, by community-based courses, and more recently by bursary support for adult access and summer school students and membership of networks. Because of its geographical location, the University has close links with Dundee but the Centre for Continuing Education has maintained and increased contact with the more rural and smaller urban areas of the Region. The composition of Tayside shows a mixture of urban and rural areas, of declining industry and wealthy countryside, of deprivation and privilege. The political complexion of the Region and Districts has also been different: Dundee was dominated by a Labour council, Angus and Perth and Kinross by SNP, which meant that in the recent past the Regional Council was SNP controlled.

Under the current local government re-organisation, Tayside has been divided approximately into its district components and, in common with other new authorities, Perth and Angus Councils are maintaining the Scottish structure of locating community education services within the education departments. Dundee has reclassified Community Education and divided services between three departments. Responsibility for leisure and recreational and leisure facilities such as sports centres, school halls and playing fields will now lie with the Director of Leisure and Parks. All arts functions of the old Community Education Service will now move to the Chief Arts Officer. However the core elements of the Community Education Service of adult education and youth work are to be grouped with library services, welfare rights, and community councils in a new Neighbourhood Resources and Development Department. This decision was taken against the advice of the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities who favoured all educational services being kept together in a single department, but local circumstances were considered paramount and it was felt that the future of adult education was best safeguarded by this arrangement.

The new Dundee City Council felt that by allowing services to remain scattered between different departments it would prove more difficult to focus on community needs. The needs of the community would always remain subservient to the main areas of departmental work and so be in a precarious position if funding cuts were to be made. The new council is already looking at over capacity in Dundee schools, and discussing the possibility of school closures. Although there was initial unease within the Education Department at the loss of the Community Education Service, the new arrangement would allow the Director of Education to concentrate specifically on primary and secondary education. When compared to the national average Dundee schools were showing a lower rate of achievement and it is hoped that by solely focusing on schools this trend would be reversed. The Centre for Continuing Education will continue to have direct contact with the Education Department in Dundee and also in Angus and Perth and Kinross as they will continue to partially finance the Access Summer School.

They have also been invited to provide representation on the Access Summer School Board of Studies.

Within the new Neighbourhood Resources and Development Department there has been a complete restructuring of services under its control in order for the new department to be seen as a cohesive unit with a clear focus and not just as a collection of services. The most obvious example of this change to the public is the renaming of the professionals working in the department, whereby they are now all known as either development or resource workers, instead of community education workers or librarians. It is in ways like this that the new director hopes to effectively bridge and integrate all services and to fully exploit the synergy that exists between them.

Although community education had to be at the core of the new department it was to have a new focus in order to clarify its position for the future. There is a move away from any aspect of education for its own sake towards education as a development tool within an overall programme of social and economic regeneration, this ethos being behind the original concept of Community Education. It is now to be far more closely akin to community development. Under the regional structure the Community Development section, although a clearly identifiable team in its own right, was under the direct management of the Community Education Service. Now under the new unitary authority there is far less distinction between the two services; indeed with the community development function taking a lead over the community education function, the two are now synonymous and the whole department has an emphasis on a community development dynamic.

Not only will the relationship between the Centre for Continuing Education and Neighbourhood Resources and Development Department have to be reconsidered, but there is a situation now arisen whereby there is an increasing polarisation of what each service wants to offer and what it is able to offer. Although the Alexander Report recommended that 'Universities should develop a community development approach in stimulating demand for adult education', it never said how this could be resourced and this continues to be a problem for the university in planning any community based adult education especially with the emphasis now on accredited courses. The changing nature of mainstream funding being dependent on accredited provision does not allow the Centre to offer classes and provision that is purely of a developmental nature without seeking external funding for this. In a period of stringent budget allocation for the Centre and also for the new councils there is little extra money available for the development of new projects and new provision and developments are now often dependant on creative allocation of money that is already there. In this new department much emphasis is being placed on youth work and, as well as a tightening of funds available, adult education is not seen as the main focus of future work which could make a comprehensive working relationship even more difficult. The provision that the Centre is able to offer and what the Neighbourhood services want to develop may be two different things. This is not to say that a future working relationship is not possible but close attention will have to be paid to the changing nature of provision of the two providers and a new partnership will then be able to be formed.

If the Centre for Continuing Education is to maintain its broad based provision over the same geographical area it will now have to work with three separate unitary authorities each of whom will be organising their adult educational provision in a slightly different way from what has gone before (Dundee being the most extreme example of this), and also in different ways to each other. The political make up of the three authorities will also influence their future plans and this is something that the Centre must remain aware of. One way forward with this is to bring the new authorities together in the newly reconstituted advisory group, now to be called the Continuing Personal Education Liaison Group. Another area which must also be addressed through time is not just how the new authorities and the Centre for Continuing Education will work together but also the relationship each authority develops with its local college of further education. Alongside this, within a population centre of 175,000 Dundee has two universities and this will have implications for future developments.

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Into an uncertain yet exciting future: my journey as reflective practitioner[1]

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I embarked on an MEd degree seeking to develop my teaching but found myself pondering and grappling with the concepts of reflection and reflective practice. I was required to reflect on my experiences as midwife tutor. How can the cognitive processes (or so I thought) of reflection help me develop my teaching? I am doing it already anyway. I was filled with uncertainty. However, I decided to trust the tutors' decision for including the module titled 'Becoming a Reflective Practitioner' in the programme!

This paper will outline my somewhat emotional and eventful journey in trying to understand reflective practice as I became a reflective practitioner, and my attempts to introduce my students to learning through reflection. It will draw on these experiences in considering how student midwives can be assisted to articulate and reflect on the dynamic, unique and unpredictable practice setting to be better prepared to deal with practice problems. Where appropriate, material will be quoted from my journal.

The early days

My early journal entries skirted superficially around class incidents. I realised I was only reinforcing what I normally did when I thought I reflected: the only difference now was the process of putting thoughts onto paper. I recorded in my journal that 'I have not really started to challenge my professional practice yet' (12 October, 1993).

Sub-consciously I was afraid of the consequences of moving from one ontological state to another. As Holly (1989, 71) points out:

> ... deliberately setting off to explore what has become custom is not without its risks and discomforts as truths are challenged and the taken-for-granted is questioned, and often found to be problematic.

When I finally plucked up courage to truly examine my practices, the problematics felt overwhelming. Reflecting on feedback I had received from one group of students, I examined my behaviour in class and asked:

> How do I teach? What do I say? How do I come across? Why does my style of teaching not get as much response as A's? Why does she (student) feel threatened? I have never had such feedback before or have I chosen to ignore it? (Personal journal, 19 October, 1993).

I felt vulnerable and afraid. I retreated to my journal which proved a useful confidante:

> I do NOT want to engage in reflective practice. I feel very threatened. I do not want to see my faults (19 October, 1993).

When I quipped to my colleagues that 'reflective practice can affect your health', I did not realise the semi-truth of the statement. To become reflective practitioners, we cannot escape the processes of deconstructing some basic historically tested views of ourselves nor the discomfort they may bring (Dadds, 1993). Dewey (1933, 9) considered that reflective thought is the:

> active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge ... it includes a conscious or voluntary effort to establish belief upon a firm basis of evidence and rationality.

My reflective thoughts were far from controlled and rational. I embarked on an MEd programme to develop new understandings by searching for new insights. In so doing, I accepted the challenges of 'becoming a reflective practitioner' and entered into unpredictable and unforeseen territories. There were times when I felt out of control. I was absorbed by further and deeper self-analysis and seemed intent on this road of self-crucifixion. My feelings threatened to overwhelm me. My self-esteem was at a particularly low ebb for a variety of reasons: entering self-study to become a reflective practitioner was obviously undertaken at an inappropriate time for me. These personal experiences have impressed on me the importance of the affective influences in learning - the opportunities these may provide or the barriers these may pose. Negative feelings must be dealt with. I also raise the question of whether there is a right time to engage in reflective practice.

The reflective group

I strongly agree with Dadds (1993) who argues for the support of caring, sensitive and interested critical friends to help us through these processes of self-examination. Reflecting alone has many challenges:

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[1] This paper is based upon work for an MEd degree in the Division of Adult Continuing Education, University of Sheffield. I am grateful for the support of the tutors on the course, in particular, Ms Cheryl Hunt - my 'mentor' - and Professor WA Hampton for commenting on earlier drafts of this paper.

> The self-reflection of a lone subject ... requires quite a paradoxical achievement: one part of the self must be split off from the other part in such a manner that the subject can be in a position to render aid to itself ... (Habermas 1974, 28).

I was certainly in no position to aid myself at the time. The learning climate of my 'reflective group' (comprising one tutor and five fellow MEd students) offered 'unconditional positive regard' (Rogers 1969, 62), whilst helping to sustain the challenging basis of my professional development as reflective practitioner. I confided to my journal:

> Sharing reflections with the MEd group although rather threatening and embarrassing, was also comforting and supportive. What made it okay were: my empathetic tutor, one group member having had a similar experience and others understood and explored possible reasons and solutions (19 October, 1993).

Reflecting alone can be counter productive as one's thought patterns are reinforced. Sharing reflections with trusted critical friends may provide greater potential for learning as different perspectives are generally offered. However, as I discovered, even with friends, I was afraid. I felt that I was 'confessing and baring my inner most soul' (29 January, 1995), even though what I shared was what I chose to divulge.

Reflective practice?

Some of the insights I have gained about my persona as teacher have been tested! I am now more careful of what I actually do say in class as some of my students are older and may not have done any formal studying for many years. They may feel threatened in a classroom. I try to act on feedback received; for example, a diary entry of one of my students about the first day of her course reads:

> Everyone sat in their seats and looked as nervous as I did. No eye contact was made and even the smiles had a nervous look about them (27 April, 1994).

Since then, I have made it a point to arrive in class, on a first day, before everybody else. Previously, it had been a matter of chance, although I was usually on time. I had forgotten how nerve racking a first day can be!

In making conscious the experience, then reflecting upon it with resultant outcomes and action, I realised that I was engaging in my 'lived experiences' (Van Manen 1990) in a structured way, leading me through the experiential learning cycle (Kolb 1984). Experiential learning through reflection became a learning method for me that, in Kolb's terms, combined 'work and study, theory and practice' and provided a familiar and productive arena for learning (Kolb 1984, 6). It seemed to work as follows:

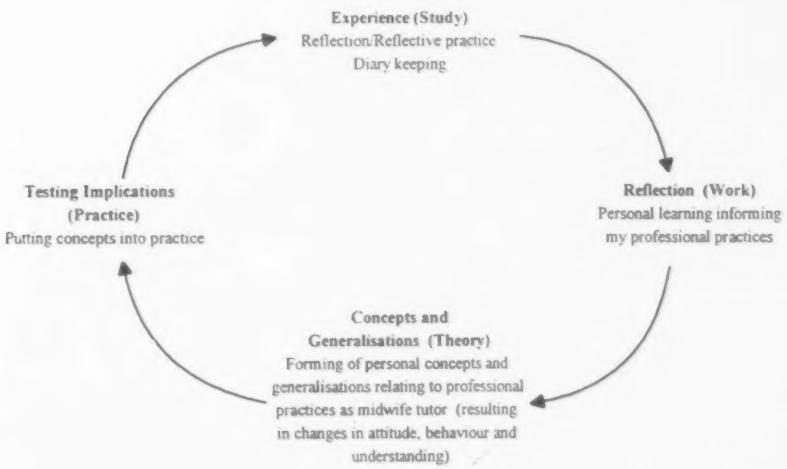
Experience (Study)
Reflection/Reflective practice
Diary keeping
Reflection (Work)
Personal learning informing my professional practices
Concepts and Generalisations (Theory)
Forming of personal concepts and generalisations relating to professional practices as midwife tutor (resulting in changes in attitude, behaviour and understanding)
Testing Implications (Practice)
Putting concepts into practice

Figure 1 Experiencing the experiential learning cycle (adapted from Kolb 1984)

In my search to gain a better understanding of how to facilitate and assess the learning of student midwives during clinical practice, my personal experiences of learning through reflection became influential. Rita Weathersby believes that 'adults learning interests are embedded in their personal histories ...' (Weathersby 1977, 19). I was conscious of my zeal for this learning strategy and the reader can

be excused for feeling sorry for my students! If I could encourage and facilitate reflection based on clinical experiences, I might be able to coach the students to deal with the 'messy problems of practice' (Schon, 1987), for which there are no straight-forward question-answer type solutions. I wanted the students to develop abilities to adapt the learning from one experience to another, and respond to each situation as a unique problem. In this way, I would be preparing them for reflective practice.

In preparation for their first clinical placement, my group of student midwives were 'subjected to', and became convinced about, the effectiveness of using the experiential learning cycle as a model to learn through practice. They agreed to record and reflect on their concrete lived clinical experiences, using structured guidelines. Written and verbal feedback were given individually on the learning achieved. I was pleased but very conscious of the power and status of the teacher over students. It takes time to write and reflect. The activities the students agreed to engage in are not part of the curriculum. I was concerned about the extra work they would be doing but felt convinced of the effectiveness of the strategy.

To further enhance learning, the students participated in a series of workshops aimed at facilitating the development of reflective skills. Reading their written accounts and listening to their 'stories' brought home to me the complexities of attempting to facilitate learning through reflection. It became obvious that the students were unable to reflect in the manner I expected by themselves, despite the provision of comprehensive structured guidelines. A lack of noticing skills and an inability to direct their own learning appeared to be the most important contributory reasons. Noticing is the 'art of becoming aware of what is happening in and around oneself' (Boud and Walker 1990, 68). It seems to be a skill which has to be present in the experience to cause the experience to be the basis for learning. Those who do not know how and what to notice may not be able to enter into the experience. An example from a student illustrates the point:

> I think it is very routine ... what they did, I learnt in the first week ... It's just like in the morning she goes round and does the visits, and in the afternoon she does the clinics, and the clinics are all the same, and then going to houses is pretty much the same ... (Discussion transcript).

This student was reflecting but not noticing; therefore, the reflection had no depth and she did not advance her thinking. Once the students developed noticing and self-directed learning skills through discussions during the workshops, they became more analytical and started to question the quality of care the clients received. I became even more aware of the difficulties I was encountering in helping my students probe more and more deeply into how and why particular events took place. Trying to facilitate reflection-on-experiences during the workshops was more difficult than I had anticipated: How do I see the experience through their eyes to help them place it within a professional context? How do I extract the relevant? Am I in a position to extract the relevant? I was not there. They were. During the discussions, we were moving in unpredictable sequences, for instance, from attending to feelings, we could move on to evaluation of care and then back again to description of the experience. The process of helping the students develop reflective skills was not easy for me or the students. Key probing phrases used, such as 'describe in detail what happened; how did you feel; how did you think the parents felt; how did your mentor felt; why do you think your mentor took those actions; why did you do what you did; what knowledge can you recall to support what you saw/did; what have you learnt from this experience; what else do you want to learn from a similar experience; would you do anything differently next time?' were answered with much difficulty. I felt as though I was forcing responses from the students and making them say things when they didn't want to.

I was obviously in no position to pass judgement on whether care was given correctly or otherwise, but I could assist the students to analyse critically their experiences in terms of current theories in use, and consider the constraints and possibilities for genuine alternatives. This helped them link theory to practice so that they could evaluate care given and set further learning goals. What they learnt from one experience could be transferred to another similar experience.

Conclusion

What I had classed as reflective thought before I began the MEd was 'routine thought' - guided and influenced by tradition and authority (Goodman, 1982). I have since found that reflection requires the exploration of thought processes, personal attitudes and underlying issues of practice. Resultant changes in attitudes with a commitment to action, based on such personal and thoughtful learning, transforms reflection into reflective practice. As I created and encountered new self-knowledge I became more and more aware of my shortcomings. At first, I became even more afraid of sharing such reflections for fear of possible criticisms or evaluations that might lead me to further challenge and question what positive views I still held of myself and my work. I did not have the complete attitude of 'wholeheartedness' (Dewey 1933, 31) giving me the inner strength required for genuine

reflection to work through fears and insecurity. However, I have 'toughened up' with experience and learnt to balance 'my need to know' with the 'need to defend myself'. Also, I am now more careful, and very aware of the sensitivity of the process, when I request qualified midwives to reflect on their experiences to learn the process of reflection.

Engaging in my 'lived experiences' in a structured way has helped me gain a deeper understanding of professional problems and question the taken-for-granted. The ensuing critical awareness has empowered and emancipated me to reshape my practices, opening new futures for my professional role. In asking the question, 'What is it that I am actually doing?' (Devereax 1967, 7), I begin to 'speak' rather than 'speak about' the problems of practice (Hampton 1993).

In my teaching, I am primarily concerned with meeting the demands of the midwifery curriculum, one of which is that the students should achieve their clinical competencies.

Abilities to perform in the clinical setting are traditionally assessed through the development of competence during clinical practice. This is judged by the student's ability to perform the 'task' at the time. Learning from experience is thus compartmentalised into discrete boxes of competence achieved. Such achievements do not prepare students adequately to care for each unique patient. Scant attention is paid to the process of learning as a way of enabling students to deal better with the messy problems of practice. If students are to be prepared to be 'fit-for-purpose', reflective learning also needs to take place. This learning process will address issues of relevance to students' clinical experience, empower them to become self-directed life-long learners, with abilities to deal with the 'swampy lowlands' (Schon 1987, 3) of practice.

I am now spending more time with my students discussing clinical experiences. This is unfortunately limited. I am not best placed to help the students learn from their experiences as I do not work alongside them during clinical practice. I therefore capitalise on the instances when I prepare qualified midwives for their mentoring role. I now emphasise the values and strategy of learning through reflection, and facilitate their development as reflective practitioners! The students would thus benefit from their mentors' abilities.

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The future of university continuing education: 'What is to be done?'

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The UK Higher Education system is undergoing fundamental change and transition. This assertion is no longer contentious. Similarly, it is not widely acknowledged that University Continuing Education (CE) is at the cutting edge of this process and is, potentially if not actually, a dominant force within the political and strategic context of the change process. Much has been written recently on these themes (Scott 1995; Duke 1992; Schuller 1995) and much more remains to be analysed and discussed as the process unfolds. However, there has been little debate on the wider ideological context within which the transformation of CE is taking place and this paper tries to address some of these issues.

The essential features of contemporary University CE in the UK are now well-known, within the professional community, and need be summarised only briefly here. The changes in CE over the last few years have been driven primarily by two interrelated systemic factors: the need to rationalise the funding system within the overall HEFCs' structures, given the ending of the binary division; and the impetus towards accessibility and vocationalism within the HE system. For CE, the results have been the mainstreaming, via accreditation at Level 1 or above of an undergraduate degree, of virtually all the previously non-accredited liberal adult education (though there are significant variations in this pattern in Wales and Scotland); the continuing emphasis upon vocational CE, broadly defined and mainstreamed across HEIs, and hence the priority given to working with TECs, professional bodies *et al*; the rapid development of non-traditional student entry - mature, part-time, locally recruited, wider social background (though, as the recent HEFCE report on 'Widening Access' noted, there has been remarkably little progress in broadening the social class base of the University student population); and the curriculum development in CE, associated with all these factors and with the rapid increase in overall student numbers and the growth of modularity and credit systems (Robertson 1994).

As with almost all major change there are pluses and minuses to these processes. How these are weighted in the final analysis depends upon prior ideological commitments. For me, the overall balance of the changes is clearly beneficial, at least potentially. The increase in accessibility, the potential for innovative inter-disciplinary curriculum development, and the greater linkage between Universities and the community, broadly defined, all add up to a major advance in the historic CE mission. My focus here, though, is not to discuss and analyse these general trends but to concentrate upon the profound changes in the contemporary *ideological* context of CE compared with its historical 'liberalism' (Taylor *et al*, 1985; Crombie and Harries-Jenkins, 1983).

There is a central paradox in the recent achievement of increased accessibility: at the very time when CE's access mission has been more significantly advanced than ever before, the underlying purpose and rationale for accessibility has been radically undermined, at the very least. In the past, the CE commitment to accessibility was based essentially upon a spectrum of liberal and socialist ideological perspectives. From the liberal end, so to speak, there was an *a priori* belief that as many individuals as possible should have access to the knowledge, learning and the culture of the University for what we would now term 'personal development', and in order to create a more integrated, aware and active economic and political democracy. From the more socialist perspective, access to HE for working-class people was seen as an essential part of the evolutionary process of achieving democratic socialism. (A variant on this was the commitment of the revolutionary left to an explicitly Marxist educational process, through the NCLC (McIlroy 1990; Taylor *et al* 1985)).

These reference points have been almost obliterated. Whilst liberalism of course remains a force - and there is an argument for asserting that, despite the onslaughts of the last fifteen and more years, liberal principles of education still underlie much of University practice - it has been largely re-articulated in neo-Thatcherite terms. 'Personal development' is measured, at least implicitly, by largely instrumental and material criteria. The major though not the only criterion is seen as the acquisition of both specific knowledge and skills, and of generic skills, to equip the individual for obtaining a 'good job'.

As far as socialism is concerned, it hardly needs emphasis that since the collapse of communism internationally and the marked retreat across Europe and elsewhere of all varities of democratic socialism, the socialist project is not what it was! If ever there was a case for using the overworked 'in crisis' tag, it is surely in relation to socialism in the 1990s and beyond. Empirically, this is beyond dispute as the briefest survey of communist and socialist parties (and the industrial Labour movement) in Europe will testify. Organizationally and politically socialism is on the retreat. But it is also in retreat ideologically and intellectually. At one level, socialism as a body of intellectual analysis and moral and political commitment has been a casualty of post-modern analysis which has undermined all notions of

ideological commitment and universalist analytical frameworks.

Before looking more closely at this post-modernist debate, attention is turned to the practical *real politik* implications of this general ideological context for the future development of University CE. It seems reasonable to assume that by 1997 the UK will have a majority Labour Government. What will be the impact of 'New Labour' thinking and policy upon CE, within the overall context of HE? The first, obvious, point is that an incoming Labour Government will not be a *socialist* Government in the educational or in any other sphere. Whatever definition of socialism is adopted, it is becoming increasingly clear that Ralph Miliband was correct in his dictum some years ago that socialist parties have ceased to be reformist and are now merely parties of modest social reform.

Given this orientation, what are the main changes that a Labour Government is likely to make, in terms of University CE, and HE more generally. There will be a clear emphasis upon the FE rather than HE sector, and more than likely the abolition of the final binary divide in post-compulsory education and the creation of a single Funding Council structure. Regional devolution, for both collaborative policy and strategy and for funding decisions, is also likely though fraught with problems. In terms of finance, there will be no significant further funds for HE but there may be some encouragement for non-standard, under-represented groups and some incentive for accelerated accessibility from FE to HE levels. The Dearing Committee will almost certainly recommend some progress on the anomalous position over part-time and full-time student funding - and a Labour Government will hopefully act on such recommendations and encourage further advance in this area (for example, incentives for more local recruitment, for more curriculum innovation etc). So the likelihood is, overall, that the election of a Labour Government will mark a modest improvement for CE interests. However, two key points need emphasis: the highest priority will be given to FE and, within that, to job creation via education and training for the 16-19 year old age group; and a Labour Government will not provide any socialist ideological input to the overall aims and objectives of CE or the wider HE system. Thus, for example, the key questions of what accessibility is *for* (Yeo 1991), will remain unanswered - though implicitly the current vocational and individualistic rationale will remain unchallenged.

Finally, then, what of the post-modernist challenge to traditional CE concerns with social and socialist purpose? Post-modernism is characterised by a rejection of any universalising theory, any 'grand narrative' and an assertion of 'primary, diminished expectations, subjectivism, individuality, peculiarity and localism as the embodients of the good' (Alexander 1995). In the economic sphere, market criteria have come to dominate and the decentred, entrepreneurial ideology of neo-conservatism has become the norm. All this, though, has been contextualised within a new version of the 'old soulful corporation' (hence, HRM, 'quality' concerns, democratic management styles) and the somewhat naive glorification of 'technology' - this time in the form of the computer revolution. In post-modernism, moral relativism has become dominant: there are no normative criteria, or certainly not universal criteria. 'Every idea in postmodern thought is a reflection upon the categories and false aspirations of the traditional collectivist narrative, and for postmodernists the dystopia of the contemporary world is the semantic result' (Alexander 1995). Socialism, like all other universalistic systems, has been shown to be false, misleading, and disastrous in its consequences.

Post modernism is a 'many headed beast', and is still very much theory in the making (Alexander 1995). Nevertheless, it is essentially, at least in the socio-political sphere, a bleak and dangerously negative perspective. Its effect in the real world, where intellectual frameworks are translated into economic and social practice and influence power structures and priorities, has been profoundly conservative.

How then can a social purpose ethic be re-articulated and preserved in contemporary CE? For some more positive commentators on the Left, there are signs of a new intellectual framework of 'neo-modernism' which sees capitalist and former communist systems being 'transformed into a market oriented system that is liberating or, at least, substantively rational' (Alexander 1995). In addition to the prevalent notion of 'market socialism' (Alexander 1995), the political developments in Eastern Europe - from Walesa and *Solidarity* through to Gorbachev, Havel and beyond - have been hailed, by some, as heralding a breakthrough in *democratic* theory and practice. 'This re-emergence has taken the form of the revival of the concept of 'civil society', the informal, non-state, and non-economic realm of public and personal life ... (in the past) ... defined as vital to the maintenance of the democratic state. ... Pluralism, fragmentation, differentiation and participation have become the new order of the day' (Alexander 1995).

> There is here a new insistence, within a free market context, on social responsibility in the economic context (eg. redistributive policies, environmentalism *et al*) and the

individual's human rights in civil society. The main 'enemies' are seen not as traditional capitalism, but rather as nationalism. To cite Alexander again:

> The logic of these telling institutional and cultural shifts is that nationalism - not traditionalism, communism or the 'East' - is coming to represent the principal challenge to the newly universalized discourse of the good ...nationalism is now routinely portrayed as the successor of Communism ...' (Alexander, 1995)

There is a widespread emphasis upon the need for CE to work in partnership with and in the interests of under-represented minorities, including ethnic minorities, unwaged people and of course women. These concerns follow on directly from the orientations of the 1970s and 80s in the women's movement, other social movements (such as the peace movement) and, not least, the progressive Eurocommunist political movements. Some traditional areas of CE have been radically transformed to take account of new developments. Workers education in the UK, for example, now routinely includes provision for women trade unionists, and for white collar workers, and incorporates schemes for obtaining professionally recognized HE credit for industrial experience and study. Just as the Left generally may be, should be, groping towards new definitions of radical social purpose, so should CE be pursuing the same path. This can only be built upon the *positive* experiences of the 1980s, and indeed of the socialist and progressive traditions over the decades before them. The experience and politics of the social movements of the last two decades have much to offer here - particularly the women's movement and the European peace movement of the 1970s and 1980s. Both developed autonomous, democratic, internationalist, and non-hierarchical ways of communicating and working: and both thus created through praxis their own politics and culture.

Are there lessons here for the way in which social purpose for CE might be reconstructed? How does this relate to the politics of 'New Labour' and the reality of our institutional location?

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Diversity and development: gendered approaches to learning, teaching and assessment

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Introduction

The comparatively recent changes in the nature of university adult education brought about through the need to develop award bearing courses as a requirement for funding has had some interesting consequences. Most noticeably at Bradford University there is a discernible difference in our student population. This paper suggests that, as the development of accreditation has led to a more diverse student population who are likely to have different learning requirements, we need to understand these requirements and develop and use a variety of different teaching and assessment strategies with the aim of promoting successful learning for all.

Development and diversity

Pre 1994, Continuing Education at Bradford University provided a fairly typical liberal adult education programme of mostly arts and humanities subjects patronised mainly by middle class, white people, many of whom were retired. With the advent of part-time certificate, diploma and degree courses we now have students from a variety of different backgrounds whose ages span 20 to 80 plus years. Not only have student numbers increased quite dramatically this year with a 95% increase on 1994/95 figures, but we are also attracting students from ethnic minority groups, 7% in 1994/95 and 10% this year. Furthermore, the gender breakdown over the two years shows a modest increase of women students (2%) that includes twice as many women from ethnic minority groups for this academic year. Last year (1994/95) 53% of students were women and 47% men, and this year (1995/96) 55% are women and 45% are men. What is also interesting about the composition of our students is the broad spread of ages. Over both years the majority of students fall in the 30-49 age bracket, but this year there are more students in their twenties, particularly women, and more students overall in the post-sixty age groups.

The broader student mix can be said to be related to the development of new accredited courses. The certificate in personal and professional development, for example, is attracting younger students. This course is made up of modules that are skills related, such as team building, neuro-linguistic programming and counselling all of which have very practical applications as well as a theoretical basis. This in itself has implications for the use of appropriate methods of teaching, learning and assessment. It can be argued that whereas local history modules lend themselves to more traditional methods of teaching and assessment such as lectures and essays, skills-based modules may be more effectively taught and assessed in alternative ways such as group work, practical demonstrations, case studies or learning journals.

The current scenario then, is that of a modular system of traditional and non-traditional assessed courses being studied by a diverse student population in terms of age, gender, ethnicity and social background; all these are factors that influence how students learn. The motivations and expectations of a 25 year old woman studying counselling are likely to be very different to a 59 year old man studying local and regional history. We need to acknowledge this diversity and consider the appropriateness of teaching and assessment strategies both in terms of meeting students' needs and the suitability of such strategies for communicating knowledge and assessing it.

Gendered approaches to learning

Understanding adult student's motivations and approaches to learning is a useful adjunct, if not a necessary pre-requisite, to formulating teaching and assessment strategies. My research (Thomas 1995) into gendered approaches to learning explores the relationship between gender identity, men's and women's perceptions of knowledge and their related learning preferences. The work of Belenky *et al* (1986) on women's ways of knowing stimulated my interest in this topic. They start from the premise that:

> ...conceptions of knowledge and truth that are accepted and articulated today have been shaped throughout history by the male-dominated majority culture... Relatively little attention has been given to modes of learning, knowing, and valuing that may be specific to, or at least common in, women. (5-6)

Belenky *et al* (1986) see intuitive, emotional modes of thinking and being as women's ways and they argue that in a technologically oriented society that values rationalism and objectivity, women's contributions are often devalued. They also argue that women's experiences are expected to fit into models and research based on male subjects, such as Perry's (1968) stages of intellectual development. Using Perry's (1968) framework as a start point, Belenky *et al* (1986) interviewed 135 women from a variety of backgrounds in different educational settings and developed five epistemological categories that reflect different ways that women relate to knowledge: silence, received knowledge, subjective knowledge, procedural knowledge, and constructive knowledge.

Fundamental to their research is the belief that women's ways of knowing are inherently grounded in their gender identity (see Chodorow 1989, and Gilligan 1993); thus women are seen as connected knowers who demonstrate a natural preference for a subjective, intuitive approach to knowledge. Men are seen as separate knowers with a preference for an objective and logical approach to knowledge.

Edwards (1993) also uses the concepts of separate and connected but in a different way. The relationship between gender and inequality in power relationships in society is Edwards' starting point for understanding women's experiences of education. She uses the public/private dichotomy and makes the point that the two spheres have particular associations with the two sexes. The public sphere is generally associated with the male world as 'the world of paid work, politics, formal education, culture and the general exercise of power and authority' (18). The private sphere, though associated with men because they move between the two, is predominantly women's sphere; it is the domestic world of childrearing, homemaking and unpaid labour. Low status is attached to the private sphere in comparison to the public sphere. Edwards' (1993) study on mature women students looks at how women manage the public sphere of education with the private sphere of family life and she argues that if women have an inherent tendency towards affiliation with others then they should attempt to connect their education experiences with their family life. In effect, Edwards uncovered a variety of women's responses to managing education and home life that changed over time and varied depending on what aspect was under consideration. Half of the women in her study attempted the connection of education and family, a fifth of them kept the two spheres totally separate, and the rest had a mix of connections and separations of education and family. Therefore is seems plausible to argue that the same may also apply to some men; they may not all operate from a separate mode, and they may also react according to the situation. It could even be argued that men, who have access to both public and private spheres, are likely to find it easier to connect education with their family life than women.

Within the context of Belenky *et al's* (1986) and Edwards' (1993) research I explored men's and women's educational experiences with a view to clarifying the extent to which women favour a connected orientation and men a separate orientation in managing their learning. A questionnaire was completed by 56 part-time, adult students (38 women, 18 men) studying either a part-time degree in social studies (25 women, 8 men) or an access course (13 women, 10 men) and 5 students were interviewed.

The most significant findings and those with the greatest implications for teaching and assessment methods, relate to student's reasons for studying, their age and social circumstances. In line with the view that women are more connected than men (Gilligan 1993; Belenky *et al* 1986) and that individual goals are related to separate knowing (Enns 1993), it was expected that men would be predominantly goal oriented and women process oriented in relation to their motives for studying. This was not found to be the case. Half of the men were goal oriented and half process oriented, the latter in the 25-44 age group. Though 60% of the women were process oriented it is particularly noticeable that all 6 of the women in the 20-24 age group gave goal related reasons for studying. This suggests that age may be a more important determinant of motivation than gender. McGivney (1990) makes the point that motivations for participation in education do vary according to gender and age and says:

> younger adults and men learn more for employment related reasons, while older adults and women learn more for personal satisfaction, self-development, leisure purposes and family or role transitions. (24)

Another explanation is offered by theories of psychosocial and adult development (Erikson 1968, Levinson 1978) that describe the 20-24 age group as the time when young adults work to establish their identities and place in the world. Similarly, older students may be going through a particular life-stage transition that results in some kind of change. In Levinson's (1978) stages of men's development, the resolution of the mid-life transition, occurring somewhere around the age of 40-65 years, involves a man becoming aware of and expressing his feminine side. It is said to be a time when men incorporate typically feminine characteristics such as sensitivity and feeling; thus they would be more inclined towards a connected way of being.

Students responses to what they enjoy most about studying also provide an interesting insight. The most common response irrespective of gender involves reference to knowledge, learning or understanding or a combination of all three. Almost half of the women refer to socializing as an important part of their learning. This suggests a need for connection as part of the learning process. However, it is noticeable that unemployed men also make reference to social aspects of study. In Edwards' (1993) terms, although a man has access to both public and private spheres, his position as an unemployed person relegates him to the private sphere with its associated powerlessness. The psychological effects of unemployment often manifest themselves as a lack of self-confidence and self-worth,

together with a crisis of identity. Social contact in the public sphere could be a necessary requirement for re-building a confident sense of self. This serves to reinforce Edwards' (1993) views that the environment does influence whether a connected or separate approach is taken and that these issues are social and political rather than grounded in individuality.

Further evidence suggests that overall women have a slight preference for learning with others rather than learning alone, they favour co-operating rather than competing with other students, and have no strong preference for whether they prefer their ideas to be challenged or supported. Interestingly, all the young women who were goal oriented showed a preference for having their ideas challenged. Men, generally prefer to keep their options open and show no distinct preference.

The idea that women's and men's approaches to knowledge are predominantly linked to their gender identity is one that is difficult to accept, if only because it is too simplistic a way of trying to understand human behaviour and experience. Women do appear to be more connected than men. But the research of Wilkinson (1994) on the changing roles and perceptions of women aged between 18 and 34 shows that gender differences in young people are blurring, with women adopting characteristics once identified as male, such as a willingness to take risks and a desire for adventure. Also, Thompson and Pleck (1987) in a study that looked at young male college students' perceptions of male role norms, found that traditional male role norms were not fully endorsed. Patterns of connecting or separating education and family do not seem to be so much gender specific as student specific. They are a reflection of a complex interaction of different factors that change over time. The student's level of confidence and their sense of self, their stage of intellectual development, their particular family and the values within it, all interact and affect the extent to which students will try and connect or keep separate their education and families.

Teaching and assessment issues

Linked to the view that women are connected knowers are Belenky *et al's* (1986) ideas about feminist pedagogy. They see the teacher as 'midwife' whose role is to facilitate learning by starting from the student's existing knowledge and building on that. Collaboration and co-operation both between students, and students and teacher are seen as a means of empowering the students. Enns (1993) suggests that men as well as women can benefit from learning based on this kind of feminist pedagogy, just as some women do well in a traditional setting that favours separate knowing. Belenky *et al* (1986) do acknowledge that 'separate and connected knowing are not gender-specific' (102), but that they may be gender related with more women favouring connected knowing and men favouring separate knowing. It seems to make sense therefore, to offer a variety of teaching approaches. Enns (1993) states that

> teaching methods based on collaboration and co-operation are important because they allow for the mutual stimulation of thinking, the exchange of various perspectives, and the generation of creative solutions to problems. (8)

Forms of assessment also impact on students' learning. The purpose of assessment needs to be clarified in terms of how well it measures the learning outcomes of the module or course. Diaries, learning logs, journals and portfolios all entail students reflecting upon their learning and thus encourage a connected and deep approach to learning. Group projects, though often difficult for part-time students to manage, can be a way of increasing students' self-confidence and of developing a collaborative approach. Peer and self assessment also have the benefit of encouraging a deep approach to learning. These methods of student-centred assessment seem even more appropriate to adult students who are likely to take them seriously.

Conclusion

In a climate of customer driven education, where our survival depends on the success of our students we need to have an understanding of their motivations, expectations and learning processes. We need to be more adventurous in the teaching and assessment methods we employ in order to reach all students and not just those who can readily adapt to the traditional, objective approach to knowledge. If our mission as adult educators is to widen access to higher education and create opportunities for adults, then we need to take account of the diverse nature of our students and their different levels of intellectual development. Using a variety of teaching and assessment methods appropriate to the subject matter will make the learning experience richer for all concerned.

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Experience never ends: connecting life history work and experiential learning

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This essay explores what the oral history literature about experience and remembered testimony might contribute to the educational literature about experiential learning, focussing on five key propositions about learning from experience (Boud, Cohen and Walker 1993).

Proposition one: experience is the foundation of, and stimulus for, learning

In *Experiential Learning* (1984), David Kolb asserts the centrality of experience for learning, and suggests a triangular linkage between experience, learning and knowledge: 'Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience' (38); and 'Knowledge is continuously derived from and tested out in the experiences of the learners' (27). Through an active engagement with experience, learning can be 'initiated, reviewed, challenged and reconsidered' (Andresen *et al*, 1995: 5). This process might involve a current or recent experience through which we learn as we try to make sense of what has happened, or it might equally apply to an experience in the more distant past, and the processes of learning as we make new sense of it in the light of a new situation or new ways of knowing. Conversely, we make sense of (learn from) a new experience by drawing upon understandings developed through prior experience.

My own oral history interviews with Australian war veterans highlighted the ways in which, throughout their lives, they continued to make new sense of the war experience, even during the interviews (Thomson 1994). But because the primary concern of most oral historians has been to use remembered testimony as an historical source, they have often neglected the learning that has been activated as interviewees articulate their memories. However, the associated practice of reminiscence work is primarily concerned with facilitating remembering which is valuable for the narrator or narrators. In Britain, reminiscence activities with this aim comprise an active social movement, with groups operating in a wide range of social care and informal education settings, involving not just older adults but a diverse range of people for whom remembering is seen to serve a therapeutic and empowering role: people with mental of physical health problems; adults with learning disabilities; children dealing with grief or abuse (Bornat 1994; Haight and Webster 1995; see also Gluck and Patai 1991). Further research might usefully consider the practical and theoretical interconnections between reminiscence work and experiential learning.

Proposition two: learning requires an active engagement with and construction of experience

As Aitchison and Graham (1989, 161) explain: 'we do not necessarily learn from experience. Experience has to be arrested, examined, analysed, considered and negotiated in order to shift it to knowledge'. Thus Peter Jarvis (1987, 171) argues that there are 'meaningless' experiences, such as the situation of 'anomie', 'when the gulf between the socio-cultural milieu and people's stock of knowledge is too great for learning to occur, [and] the inability to provide a meaning to some of life's experiences is both debilitating and not conducive to the development of self'. For example, several of my interviewee veterans of the Great War found their prewar conceptions of war and masculinity entirely inadequate and inappropriate to make any sense of what was happening to them in the trenches, and were, in some cases quite literally, rendered speechless, unable to comprehend or articulate their new world. However, Jarvis notes that such a disjuncture might also be a catalyst for learning. As Paul Fussell explains in *The Great War and Modern Memory* (1975), and as my interviews confirmed, combatants also struggled - both during and long after that war - to generate new ways of knowing their world, and new ways of narrating and remembering war. Fred Farrall, a shell shock victim who suffered a nervous breakdown in 1926, could and would not talk about what he felt to be his emasculation through war experience, until post-Vietnam War Australian social histories and war films showed that his particular experience of fear and inadequacy was common to many soldiers.

One corollary of this argument is that reflective thought is a necessary part of experiential learning: 'as long as the learner lives and has access to memory ... the quality of reflective thought that the learner brings to any experience is of greater significance to the eventual learning outcomes than the nature of the experience itself' (Andresen *et al* 1995). A second corollary is that meaningful articulation of experience can be on-going and never-ending; indeed, as Boud, Cohen and Walker (1993, 9) comment, 'meaning may take many years to become apparent. The experience itself may not change, but the learning from it can grow, the meaning of it can be transformed, and the effects of it can be altered'. These formulations connect to oral historians' recognition of the continual process through which people reconstruct experience and articulate new sense of and for their lives. Experience is rich with interpretative possibilities

which can emerge and change over time. If our initial experience includes both the event and the sense we make of it, and if that sense changes, then in effect the experience never ends.

Proposition three: experiential learning is a socio-cultural process

One criticism of experience-based teaching approaches is that they can lead to an anecdotal valorisation of individual experience. In fact, good teaching practice would ensure that students interrogate their own experiences by exploring the ways in which these may have influenced by wider socio-cultural processes, but the reminder of critics is salutory: 'experience is never innocent' (Avis 1995, 182). Experience and its articulation are social processes, culturally bound by social values, languages and narrative forms which shape how we can live and make sense of our lives. Exponents of experiential learning argue that this is one of the strengths of the approach, in that the process of critical reflection upon such influences can 'take us inwards on the journey of self-exploration to our past and outwards towards engaging with powerful material and social forces of oppression' (Boud *et al* 1993, 14).

This formulation connects with cultural models of remembering which have been developed by historians. For example, in the early 1980s the Popular Memory Group in Birmingham drew upon Raymond Williams' notion that the initial, inarticulate consciousness or 'structure of feelings' regarding an experience is articulated through public forms and metaphors which shape and bind that consciousness into a more fixed state. According to the Popular Memory Group, powerful public representations are thus used as an aid in the constant process of making sense of personal experiences, 'offering forms and general interpretative categories by means of which people can locate their own experience in terms of wider social patterns' (Dawson and West 1984, 10-11; and see Popular Memory Group 1982; Portelli 1991).

The available public languages and forms never exactly fit experience - indeed dominant meanings, for example about gendered identity, may 'story' an individual's experience in discomforting and oppressive ways - and there is always a tension between personal experience and public sense. Yet the social meanings which we use to articulate and remember experience do not necessarily obliterate experiences which make no acceptable public sense. Incoherent, unstructured and indeed un-remembered, such experiences may linger in memory and find articulation through alternative social meanings, or perhaps in less conscious outlets such as dreams. New experiences constantly stretch the old forms and eventually require and generate new ways of understanding.

A further aspect of this cultural model of remembering is the distinction between the 'general' and 'particular' publics within which we articulate and remember experience. The general public includes the various media - newspapers, television, books and so on - which provide generally available representations and interpretative categories (the 'public field of representations') in an indirect, impersonal relationship. We also make sense of experience by using the meanings available within the active relationships of a particular public group, such as a wartime platoon, or a study group. The particular public is significant in a number of ways. Firstly, a member of a particular public may participate in and contribute to the development of those meanings. Secondly, because of the importance of social acceptance and affirmation the particular public is especially influential, and potentially repressive, in the construction of meaning and identity. Thirdly, a particular public may provide an important site for the maintenance of alternative or oppositional meaning, a source of public strength for its members to filter or even reject and contest socially powerful narratives.

For the educator these understandings of the particular public have a direct pertinence when they are applied to the socio-cultural context of a teaching class or study group. Experience-based teaching and learning approaches aim to provide a particular public which enables participants to interrogate their experience in new ways, to recognise the social construction of their experience and identity and to develop (or learn) new ways of knowing the self, the world and the relationship between the self and the social world. Similarly, the oral history relationship between interviewer and interviewee can be a significant particular public for remembering and the reconstitution of identities.

Propositions four and five: learning is a holistic process ... influenced by the socio-emotional contexts in which it occurs

Experience may be articulated or expressed in cognitive and/or emotive forms, both at the time of an initial event and as it is remembered. New learning by adult students is often hindered or blocked by significant emotional factors. For example, the adult education classroom may touch off powerful negative feelings from prior educational experiences. Childhood labels about intelligence and ability can create a sense of being an imposter which may, in turn, be heightened by insensitive criticism, by incomprehensible language or by authoritarian teaching practice. Or the actual subject of study - for example a seminar about family structures - might

evoke personal connections and feelings, not always at a conscious level, which get in the way of learning.

Experience-based teaching therefore emphasises the importance of recognising and exploring the origins and significance of emotions which are obstructing learning. Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985, 18-40) offer a three stage approach for this facilitation in educational settings which includes 'returning to the experience', 'attending to feelings' and 're-evaluating experience'. In a more recent article, Boud and Walker (1993, 81) explain that 'facilitation of learning is essentially about helping learners deal with their barriers to learning' by acknowedging and naming such barriers, by identifying how they work through critical reflection on their origins, and by using transformative or confrontational strategies to break through the barriers. They note, significantly, that in certain cases this revisiting and reexamination may require intensive therapeutic assistance which is beyond the scope of an educational facilitator. Certainly the role of a facilitator is pivotal in creating a safe and effective context for experiential learning.

Educationalists' recognition of the emotive or psychological aspects of experiential learning parallels oral historians' increasing interest in the subjective aspects of remembering. Luisa Passerini's (1987) analysis of the silences in memories of Italian fascism alerted oral historians to the significance of subjectivity in remembering. Drawing upon the ideas of Passerini and the Popular Memory Group, I used the notion of 'composure' to make sense of war veterans' memories. Composure is an aptly ambiguous term to describe the socio-emotional process of remembering. In the social or cultural sense outlined above, we compose or construct memories using the public languages and meanings of our culture. In another, more psychological sense, we compose memories that help us to feel relatively comfortable with our own lives and identities, that give us a feeling of composure. Through our remembering we struggle to compose a past we can live with. For example, several of my war veteran interviewees narrated their war through a series of fixed anecdotes, which they had developed and rehearsed over many years, and which usually made sense of the war in humorous and comfortable terms. They had shut away more awkward or painful memories, and sometimes resisted questions which cut across their safe ways of remembering.

This psychological sense of composure presumes a dialectical relationship between memory and identity. Our identity (or 'identities', a more appropriate term to suggest the multi-faceted and contradictory nature of subjectivity) is the sense of self which we construct by comparisons with other people and with our own life over time. We construct our identities by telling stories, either to ourselves as inner stories or daydreams, or to other people in social situations. Remembering is one of the vital ways in which we identify ourselves in story-telling. In our story-telling we identify what we think we have been, who we think we are now and what we want to become. The stories which we remember will not be exact representations of our past, but will draw upon aspects of that past and mould them to fit current identities and aspirations. Thus our identities shape remembering; who we think we are now and what we want to become affects what we think we have been. Memories are thus significant pasts which we compose to make a more comfortable sense of our life over time, and in which past and current identities are brought more into line.

There are many ways in which our remembered experiences - of both the immediate and distant past - may threaten and disturb identities and thus require composure. Traumatic experiences may violate public taboos or personal comprehension. Dramatic life changes often render old identities irrelevant and require drastic re-evaluation. Everyday psychological life comprises frustrated desires and debilitating losses which we seek to compose into a safer, less painful sense. Thus our public remembering and private inner stories often seek to compose a safe and necessary personal coherence out of the unresolved, risky and painful pieces of past and present lives. Yet stories rarely provide complete or satisfactory containment of threatening experiences from the past. Our attempt at composure is rarely achieved and we are left with unresolved tension and fragmented, contradictory identities. Composure, 'based as it is on repression, and exclusion, is never achieved, constantly threatened, undermined, disrupted' (Dawson and West 1984, 28).

This brings me back to the key theoretical link between the two senses of composure, that the apparently private process of composing safe memories is in fact very public. Our memories are risky and painful if they do not fit the public stories, so we try to compose our memories so that they will fit with what is publicly acceptable. Just as we seek the affirmation of our personal identities within the particular publics in which we live, we also seek affirmation of our memories. 'Recognition' is a useful term to describe the process of public affirmation of identities and memories. Recognition is essential for social and emotional survival; the alternative of alienation and exclusion may be psychologically devastating. We may seek recognition in other, more empathetic publics, but our memories need the sustenance of public recognition, and are composed so that they will be recognised and affirmed.

This formulation of the theoretical link between personal accounts and social narratives connects back to the concern of educationists to explore the ways in which experiential learning is a socio-emotional process. It suggests that careful facilitation of an experience-based learning group can provide an opportunity for exploration of the ways in which participants' lives have been 'storied' by others, and a place for the recognition and affirmation of new stories, in which the narrators might more fully become 'the authors of both their own life and its account'.

On the other hand, like oral historians and reminiscence workers, facilitators in experience-based learning contexts also need to take care. We are initiating a process which make come up against barriers to new learning/remembering, which may touch off difficult new remembering, and which may be disturbing or empowering, or both. Educational facilitators and oral historians alike need to have an understanding of and sensitivity towards these processes, to be able to judge whether or not it might be appropriate and useful to pose difficult questions, and to recognise the boundaries of our role and the availability of alternative sources of support for uncomfortable remembering.

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Women in further education: a case study

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In 1973 the Regional Advisory Council for Further Education in the East Midlands surveyed all colleges of further education in its region to clarify the pattern of usage displayed by women students. This paper reports the central findings of a replicated survey using FEFC data collected in 1993, the last complete year available, and the results of a series of interviews carried out with twelve senior college staff throughout the region who were invited to comment on the findings, in Autumn, 1995.

The first point to note is that currently female students outnumber male students in the colleges in all areas of study with the single exception of the relatively small amount of work categorised as higher education. This marks a reversal of the 1973 pattern. The salience of a female presence may relate to the changed position of the colleges since incorporation following the 1992 Act. Placed in direct market competition with other post-compulsory providers, some colleges have seen their established student pool reduced as sixth form colleges, school-based sixth forms and private training agencies have entered the field. Combined with a sharp decline in 'traditional' apprentice-based provision, colleges have had to seek out new constituencies. One such area has been the category of mature women - the 'women returners' so often referred to in the literature.

It is at this point that market necessity and concern for 'difference' appear to intersect. Vigorous efforts have gone into targeting this group and many strategies have been adopted by the colleges. There is a recognition of the heterogeneity of the audience and the marketing approaches are carefully tailored to each gendered market niche. There is considerable evidence of what authors have referred to as specifically good practice to enable women to engage in educational activities, such as 'women friendly' access procedures which particularly encourage under-represented groups, child care, concessionary fees and flexible delivery patterns (see Coats 1996, McGivney 1991). What remains at issue is the extent to which this theory of interest goes beyond seeing these students as a convenient source of numbers in a shrinking market - the 'bums on seats' necessary to keep the institutions afloat (Thompson 1996). Perhaps the key question regarding 'women returners' relates to the kind of education to which they return. One indicator of this is the distribution of females across the curriculum categories.

In crude terms women are still largely entering 'women's' areas of the curriculum; however, certain patterns emerge. Since the seventies there has been a marked increase in the number of females entering the colleges on a full-time basis and a market decline in employer-led part-time attendance. Both of these factors may be explained by changes in the labour market in that the economic recession and different modes of production have reduced the number of occupational roles available to young people and requiring traditional forms of training. Also youth unemployment has 'encouraged' more young people to stay in education who would have previously entered the labour market. These circumstances, coupled with state pressure on young people to train or be penalised in terms of benefits, may explain these shifts. However, the survey reveals that this full-time cohort are noticeably young women located in traditional areas of health care, business and general humanities. The picture becomes particularly interesting when age patterns and modes of attendance are considered together with the programme areas. There appears a distinct pattern of young full-time students and mature part-time students concentrated in the highly gendered areas of the curriculum. In fact the student statistics suggest a pattern of preparation for or re-entry to women's work.

The mode of attendance is particularly suggestive for older students as women are dominant in the independent part-time category, which might suggest that many women preparing to enter the labour market may have to bear considerable financial burden in order to up-grade or gain skills. Additionally evening provision is again dominated by women which suggests that learning for many women may still have to be arranged around demands of families and their own paid work.

Finally, the depth of the gendering of work is well instanced in the case of areas of study categorised under science and agriculture, where women appeared in unexpectedly high numbers. More detailed statistical analysis revealed that women's science concentrated on the soft 'human' sciences and associated with such work as nursery nursing or general care, while the women's agriculture was largely confined to floristry or equine management - the terrain of the 'stable girl'.

The second section of this brief assessment refers to the interpretation of the situation provided by those professionally engaged in the field. Twelve colleges were called to nominate key senior staff to comment on the broad - and perhaps largely predictable -findings. Ten women and two men were nominated from colleges in four local authorities. What follows is an abbreviated account of their commentaries.

Foremost in all interviews is a deep commitment to some concept of equal opportunities in connection with women's work. Although varying in degree and sophistication this ethical position is associated with a clear recognition of the heterogeneity of the category. However, it was repeatedly pointed out that this increasingly sophisticated understanding of 'difference' within what has often been a crude categorisation is now being both undermined and perverted by the demands of economic survival.

> You could think about analysing your findings in the light of which social groups suddenly present themselves as visible markets. We've 'done' women returners now; next its Muslim women who can use the place on Saturdays.

This re-definition of female groups from ethical to commercial 'targets' has also appeared to undermine work on equal opportunities in the colleges, leaving its expression encoded in mission statements and on letterheads, but with few sustained initiatives to promote change.

The re-working of the discourse of women's education outlined above leads inevitably to issues of the nature of the educational experience once women enter the system. The complexity of the epistemological debate is well known (See Humm 1992; Lown 1995; Arnot 1995) but there is general agreement that in virtually all cases the pressure for educational work to become standardised and increasingly 'efficient' is overwhelming. The pressure on staff seems to appear from two sources. Firstly, there is evidence of increased intensification of work as course lengths are reduced in the name of efficiency and, secondly, a deeply felt tension between the reasons staff had entered this field of work and what they were now being expected to do.

> I feel uneasy about providing very short IT courses in the minimum hours. In a way, everybody's happy. The women get what they want and the courses make money. But at no stage do students get chance to go beyond that limited instrumental activity.

The most frequently observed position declared that the students needed saleable skills in the labour market, but that a vocational education - particularly for women - should include a more critical/liberal component. The ability to provide both appears to be diminishing, and the 'space' for any work outside the definable limits appears only where full-time staff are donating their own administrative or personal time to 'enrich' the programmes (see Deem 1993).

This apparent narrowing of the range of women's education also raises questions concerning advice and guidance associated with good practice. Interviewees remarked that many mature women come to the college with low self-esteem and there is a temptation to limit advice to the immediately achievable, thus building in a potential degree of underachievement. This phenomenon was often associated with the self-limiting possibilities provided by the local labour market.

> You have to realise that the only jobs around here are for women and they are becoming more difficult to get and they're becoming part-time and casual. A lot think there's no point trying to go much beyond that.

The link between the colleges' activities and the local labour market also gives rise to a very pragmatic issue outlined by an experienced tutor.

> Put yourself in their shoes. If you really want a job and you don't want to go through a complete re-education, you're going to build on what other skills you have. You can refresh what's rusty, add a bit more and get up to speed and you'll get a job - what you really wanted at the outset. They are being quite logical.

The idea of a limited logic raises the key issue of the degree to which an educational engagement needs to challenge such restricted horizons of meaning (see Hall 1982).

Central to all the issues is the question of college finance and the corporate status of the college. Some of the institutions, which we term 'entrepreneurial' saw their new status as liberating, and the increase in the range of activities as a challenge. Perhaps ironically, it is this group that has appropriated the language of difference, flexibility, multiple forms of provision, market research and lifelong learning. However, the majority of the colleges displayed a less sanguine attitude, often seeing themselves as service organisations gradually being stripped of their social function and with a fundamentally de-skilled staff.

> At worst we hire and fire people like artisan tradesman [sic]. It's assumed that what currently exists as vocational education is what should exist. There's very little critical debate. Most part-timers are paid to deliver only what they're contracted to. That makes curriculum development very hard, but its even harder in the NVQ/competency field. It's very discouraging and frankly we feel we're being de-skilled in the name of upskilling everyone else.

In many ways this distinction between the colleges is exemplified in their interpretation of equal opportunity and access. The entrepreneurs embrace

the new forms of technology to enable any individual or group to 'access' the learning opportunities of the college. The most notable example is the college linked to a cable system in a city and capable of piping lectures, videos etc to virtual communities in any part of the conurbation. In this sense education is open and accessible to all in any social location chosen. However, the key issue relates to the concept of education that underpins such policy, and raises fundamental questions about the potential of the new technologies and where they should feature in the education of adults. Seen as a sophisticated system of delivering already determined educational content, unproblematised by an experienced educator such policy was questioned as the worst kind of 'banking' education (see Freire 1972) which serves to domesticate even further. For some, such policy is no more than a logical extension of what is happening in the colleges.

> Technology is neither a good not a bad thing - it's the way it's used. If you think education is only about giving people access to the facts, then its OK, but it's really only a sophisticated library service. If you believe education is about exploration and challenge and arguments, then it needs to be carried out with other people. It's not just about gobbling down information or learning to do something differently without asking why, then we need places for that to happen. Perhaps we'll end up back with the voluntary agencies.

This plea for an education capable of producing critical citizens was common, and if not drawn from the *conscientisation* tradition of Freire at least recognises the need for skilled workers capable of fostering a critical stance to knowledge. This leads on to the future of the 'professional' staff.

Firstly, it should be said that many staff recognised that professional development was virtually at an end as traditionally understood. Professional development has been re-defined as small inputs of practically valuable information.

> We only talk about how not why things are done. The long courses are over now. How can you deal with something as complicated as gender inequality in a half-day - it becomes a joke and in the end it will be reduced to formal practices and minding your language.

However, for the entrepreneurial colleges the future of the professional appears very different.

> I think we'll be less concerned with classroom work. Our job will be to keep abreast with developments in our subjects, keep an eye on possible markets, provide good quality learning materials and facilitate learning in the increasing number of forms of delivery. We'll probably find ourselves at quite a distance from the actual students. It may not really need a fully trained teacher to enable them to achieve in any case.

In the above case such a future was regarded as inevitable and desirable, the same scenario was viewed differently by others, and in one case seen as the end of the service.

As awards in general become more workplace-based, and as they are assessed there, I think the role of the teacher will virtually disappear - particularly for people working at the lower levels.

Others mentioned the emergence of a core-periphery labour pattern emerging in the college with a secure minority at the centre 'outsourcing' work to a peripheral casualised labour force.

This paper is drawn from a larger study (Mallia and Wallis 1996) and highlights only some of the issues raised. However, a number of more basic questions are hinted at. In the twenty years between the studies considerable efforts have been made to attract more women into the sector; by 1993 they comprised a majority of students. There is evidence of sophisticated attempts to enable access and provide support for women. Yet, the patterns of engagement remain deeply gendered (cf Middleton 1995), and while it is easy to propose the reductionist argument that colleges merely reflect the society in which they operate, the mechanisms by which these outcomes emerge would bear closer scrutiny from the point of view of the student.

At the very point women are entering post-compulsory education in significant numbers it might be that the 'opportunities' for 'growth' and 'development' have become devalued (cf Hyland 1994) and relate only to the human capital orthodoxy which seems prevalent in the new world order of globalised capital. The danger of this view of learning becomes hegemonic and re-placing earlier liberal and liberatory discourses is recognised, but challenge within the system may be hard to mount. Perhaps areas of civil society, free from direct state influence, may have to be the sites of serious resistance (Payne 1995).

In this bleak scenario the danger of educators being reduced to technicians and the curriculum being reduced to self-evident certainty may appear overstated, but those in the field see the danger. All this brings us back to the old key question of the

values that inform the education of adults. A college principal concludes

The words are still there - the right to learn, equal access for all - but the meanings are different. Perhaps our job is to try to pour the original meaning back. Wasn't it Gramsci or Humpty Dumpty who said we could make the same words mean different things.

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Slouching towards Bethlehem: contradictory imperatives in the education of adults

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The metaphor of 'slouching towards Bethlehem' comes from Yeats' poem, *The Second Coming* Nina Coltart (1985), a psychotherapist, used the metaphor in reflecting on experiences of breakdown for individuals, and the problems faced by a therapist in confronting her own uncertainty about what to do or think in difficult and disturbing experiences with a client. There are, I believe, parallels to her concern among those adult educators who seek to locate their educational praxis in a wider socially radical critique. These are uncertain and contradictory times for us all as an older rhetoric of adult education as a means to collective change and democratisation has waned and education of all kinds has been incorporated, at least in part, within a discourse of 'people processing and control' (Mayo and Thompson 1995).

Postmodernism has compounded these uncertainties. The idea of collective purpose, and adult education located within an overarching political narrative, has given way to celebrating fragmentation and life as a series of diverse discursive experiments (Briton 1996). There is the deepest suspicion at any attempt to construct a unifying discourse or way of life: universalisms of whatever kind are seen to be potentially normalising, marginalising tyrannies. The older radical adult education/social purpose rhetoric, in this view, was an element in a progressive, socialist narrative restricted, in the main, to intellectuals and an earnest but tiny minority of white, working class men (see Goodson 1994). Black and women's voices were largely absent. Abandon the attempt, the postmodernist insists, at developing a unifying social and educational theory and celebrate instead the vitality and play of many, even conflicting, stories.

I want, in this paper, to celebrate certain aspects of the postmodernist critique but to suggest that it leaves people - whole populations - vulnerable to the tyranny of powerful forces and interests. The problem with the postmodernist perspective is that some forces seek to domesticate and commodify rather than diversify and celebrate. The idea of many and varied interests and stories in interaction assumes, or requires, some equality of discursive relationships and representational possibility. In fact, globalisation and deregulated markets provoke the fracturing of many communities, deskill and silence whole peoples. The playing field turns out to be profoundly uneven.

Present imperfect

The recent publication of Marjorie Mayo and Jane Thompson's book, *'Adult Learning, Critical Intelligence and Social Change'* (1995), fifteen years after the publication of Thompson's *'Adult Education for a Change'* (1980), marks a journey, for the authors at least, from relative certainty of purpose and coherence of view to doubt in a context of the new right hegemony. This second book attempts to reinvigorate the idea of learning beyond 'five point scales': as a site for resistance and new social formations. But the tone of the book is tentative, in contrast to its predecessor, a slouch towards new ideas rather than any confident proclamation. Stephen Yeo (1995) has observed how the conference which launched the book struggled to articulate an agreed agenda or even to decide what the terms of the conversation might be.

The contradictions of 'mainstreaming'

There is a further complication in considering the present condition of adult learning. The story of the last sixteen years has, in fact, been one of increased educational opportunities for adults. Stephen MacNair (1995) has observed how continuing educators and the wider access movement 'asked for more, and for wider participation, and we got both; we asked for more access for adults, and for women...We asked for better access for part-timers...the pleas for a learning society have begun to come true'. Adults have become the new majority in higher education. There was, however, a caveat in MacNair's appraisal: the long march has, in key respects, disappointed.

One problem has been the under-financing of learners and institutions alike, a consequence of expanding levels of participation at a time of attack on various public expenditures. A recent report (CVCP 1995) noted that drop out rates were outpacing the growth in student numbers and that mature students were particularly likely to leave their courses without completing them. There is more. The impact of new right agendas and market mechanisms, sometimes unforseen and sometimes deliberate, has been considerable (see West 1996). The new educational market, as with markets more generally perhaps, appears to have delivered institutional and systemic instability alongside growing inequality between and within institutions (Ainley 1994). There is, moreover, evidence of dissatisfaction among adult learners within many programmes, and the morale of many teachers, most of all in the further education sector (faced as they are with casualisation and aggressive managements), seems to have plummeted. Withdrawal from Access programmes, for instance, could be considerable and there is evidence of stresses and strains across the entire system (West 1996; Beckett 1995; Ainley 1994; MacNair 1995).

Moreover, the curriculum to which adults have access may, in some respects, have narrowed. On one reading, a technicist, operationalist rationality has marginalised more critical and hermeneutic discourses (Barnett 1993). Within continuing education itself, the accreditation of liberal adult education may have reduced opportunities for more critical and dialogical experiment. 'Liberal adult education', for all its faults, provided an administrative umbrella for a range of radical initiatives: second chance, women's education and community development, for instance. The future of these programmes, and the people who sustained them, seems uncertain. The struggles of people to learn more on their own terms, and for educators to devolve control of programmes to learners do not easily mesh with the rhetoric of prescribed levels, outcomes and five point scales.

The postmodernist possibility

But there is another 'postmodernist' reading of current trends in the academy and in adult learning too, in which there are increasingly varied knowledges and sites for learning (Barnett, 1993). In this view new spaces are appearing under the guise of feminism, biographical and experiential learning, for instance. The crisis of positivist science, and the disappearance of any clear unifying concept of knowledge, has created spaces for different and more diverse epistemologies. New sites for adult learning are developing too: at work, in communities, in the use of new technologies, for instance (Edwards and Usher 1994). The older radical tradition, for all its certainties, was elitist, and frequently exclusionary. There are many more routes to learning in this postmodernist story, and many diverse Bethelehems.

A different perspective

There are, however, important difficulties with this postmodernist prescription. In the name of anti-totalising tendencies, for instance, a new totalising tendency seems to have emerged in the primacy of the discursive, which at worst reduces human life to a series of language games. There are no realities and depth - of self, experience or truth - beyond discourse. To argue a case, of any kind, is merely to enter a language game. More crucially, the postmodern picture has to be set against the conforming, reductionist imperatives of commodification and the global market. The deepest insecurities, alienation and despair characterise this world. Nixon (1991), among many, has noted that the postmodernist promise often bears little relation to the structural realities of most people's experience: of communities fragmenting and of individual lives often in frightening disarray; and of hopelessness for the want of apparent alternatives.

There is a paradox in all this. Sociologists such as Giddens, and psychologists such as Frosh, have described a culture which constantly precipitates crises of, as well as opportunities for, self. As tradition loses hold, as global economic forces deskill whole communities; as male linear biographical certainties - of school, work and retirement - disintegrate; as traditional gender roles are challenged, individuals need to make more of their own choices and construct more of their own meanings in conditions of perpetual uncertainty. There are opportunities here but accompanied by terrifying insecurities (Giddens 1991; Frosh 1991). And composing new stories and identities requires some security and support; a community, in other words, is needed to resist the disintegrative tendencies of late modernity.

These points became clear in researching and interpreting the experiences of adult learners in two communities suffering considerable distress, the Medway Towns and Thanet in Kent. These are localities experiencing massive dislocation in the collapse or precariousness of main and traditional sources of employment; in patterns of social deprivation, exclusion and personal despair. The Medway Towns were homogeneous working class communities built around a dockyard and other large employers such as petro-chemicals; until, that is, the closure of these main sources of employment in the early 1980s. The closures struck at the heart of the community and a whole way of life was threatened. The Medway, in this sense, is emblematic of wider trends within British society as traditional industries have collapsed and communities have been devastated by recession and the political imperatives of the last two decades. Despite the efforts of local authorities and unions to resist, the Medway, along with other similar working class localities, was the victim of the Government's free market policies and antipathy towards public expenditure (Hutton 1995). Industrial disintegration and large scale unemployment, in such locations, was considered a price worth paying.

There are possibilities for self, learning, education and more authentic narratives among these fragments, but at best life is a struggle on the edge, to keep on keeping on in constantly destabilising conditions. There seems to the deepest incongruence between a postmodernist language of celebrating fragmentation and the material realities and powerlessness of particular learners' accounts. Take Jim, for instance, a young middle aged, working class man with a wife and two sons, made redundant from the building industry in 1992. He was taking a radiography degree and desperately trying to survive against poverty and personal depression. At one interview, where I was drinking a cup of coffee, he was deeply upset because there was no money that day to provide his family with a hot drink. His working life had consisted of insecure employment, redundancy and perpetual uncertainty. Jim had felt insecure for most of his life and knew what it was to drift. He moved in and out of work in a

casualised, unstable, poorly paid, largely deregulated labour market. He turned to an Access course in the local college in some desperation. He nearly gave up on many occasions: it was the support of his wife, his sister, other students, and a love of fishing which kept him going. Other people, and creative activity with his sons, were essential to survival.

Take June who was registered for a European studies degree. Life, during her period at college, was in perpetual crisis. Her daughter had tried to commit suicide in the middle of the first year of the degree; her 18 year old son disappeared at the end of the second. June described losing her part-time job at a local supermarket which exacerbated already severe financial difficulties because of a crisis in her husband's business. She wove, over the three and a half years of the research, a patchwork of a life in the part-time, casualised, non-unionised work place, alongside emotional and material struggles at home and in college. Nothing was ever permanent in her life and livelihood depended on the whims of powerful others, including managers. June angrily described the loss of her job, halfway through the degree. She was close to giving up altogether: it was the other learners, her teachers, and the support of her partner which kept her going.

Take Pamela, a women in her early 50s, living in Thanet, who began a social science Access course. She wanted to study psychology to find an alternative lifestyle. Her distress at work was intense and she was pursuing an Access programme because she needed to escape from the job as soon as she could. Work was a source of relentless pressure which was driving her, as she put it on many occasions, to the edge. She combined her studies with work as a financial consultant in what was a fiercely competitive and insecure environment. Work occupied most hours of most days and her line manager would telephone at midnight for results, and, if contact was not made, at half past six next morning. There was no escape, she felt, since if she protested she would be out of a job and a home. There were, after all, countless others willing and anxious to take her place in a brutal world.

Pamela was stressed and depressed by the lack of control in her life and by the constant intrusion of work and the people she worked for. Time was never her own. At a second interview she opened her case, took out a piece of battered brown card and drew a rectangle on it. She divided the rectangle into four segments and put a series of crosses into each. She put her own cross in the bottom right hand corner to represent where she was placed. Being there, in that segment, meant her performance was inadequate and she might be sacked at any moment. No-one dared to complain about the pressure, or to admit doubt and weakness, it was simply unacceptable within the culture. However badly you might feel, negative thoughts and feelings would diminish performance and would not be tolerated. Pamela gave up her Access studies because she could cope no longer. June and Jim have kept going and new lives are, to an extent, being composed. But the stories are of struggle and perpetual contingency in which the support and regard of others - teachers, students, friends and partners - are essential to success. These experiences rest uncomfortably with the intoxicating, seductive language of the postmodern (West 1996).

And the key issue is what enables people - personally, socially and educationally - to take major risks with selves and identities and to keep on keeping on, even in the worst of times. The research demonstrated that, for people to learn and to establish a sense of more authentic agency, requires some notion of relationship and community, of common purpose and inter-dependence. Learning is a kind of transitional, emotional space in which it is possible to take risks and play if one is valued in the eyes and response of others. Creativity and participation are part of a complex interplay of inner and outer worlds, of projecting self and story into a shared space, of being, if it works, increasingly appreciated and valued, and able therefore to reappropriate a strengthened self in turn. The best adult learning is about humans making meaning, purpose, stories and stronger selves together. It requires a community to progress, as well as resist. There is such a thing as society.

Conclusion: a paradox

But it remains difficult to connect such a cultural psychology of learning with a specific, overarching social agenda. Like many others, I have no confident, unified social theory; and I worry about the attempt to compose one. There is a sense in which we need to slouch for a while longer to reconcile the need for the big answer to the New Right with notions of diversity and many ways of seeing. The paradox needs to be acknowledged. Perhaps the real benefit of the Ruskin Conference and Thompson and Mayo's book is the lack of confidence and certainty, which opens us to others, and the necessity of conversation transcending the schismatic dogmatism of many radical pasts.

Stephen Yeo (1996) for instance, has called for conversations which transcend the older certainties and the tempting allure of past golden ages. He uses Raymond Williams in trying to map a 'broader sense of human need and a close sense of the physical world', and of learning as productive work in its own right: in the dynamic, ordinary and everyday processes of making relationships, society and culture; and in sketching practical, self-managing and self-renewing communities in which learning, and sensitivity to others and the natural world, have a central rather than a peripheral place. He begins to break free from old mind/emotion, rational/feeling, masculine/feminine

dualities in doing so. We need an emotional as well as an intellectual literacy, for relationships, learning and cultures to thrive. To compose a sense of self and to realise some authentic agency in conditions of deep uncertainty require love and security as well as new ideas. We need to slouch, for a while, to consider the emotional, relational, economic as well as intellectual preconditions for learning to make a better world.

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Professional development and mentoring for under-represented minority faculty

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Introduction

Academic institutions in the US are continuously challenged to recruit and retain under-represented minority faculty (UMF). Recruiting UMF to and retaining them in the science and health professions poses an ever keener challenge. Although the numbers of ethnic minority faculty members in the academic community continue to grow, their representation at higher ranks, in tenure-track and tenured positions lags behind that of their non-minority colleagues (American Council on Education 1993). The growth rate among UMF in tenure track positions is less than half the rate for non-tenure track positions (American Council on Education 1993). Among academics, status and prestige are attributed to tenure track faculty; there is a corollary lack of prestige and stability associated with non-tenure track positions. Full-time UMF are much less likely to hold tenure (American Council on Education 1993).

Two other problems influence the academic career development of UMF: lack of supportive climates in their academic environments (including absence of mentoring and subtle discrimination) and the expectation that minority faculty will assume mentoring responsibilities for students of color, in addition to fulfilling academic responsibilities. UMF may have less opportunity to engage in mentoring relationships because there are fewer tenured colleagues from similar ethnic backgrounds available on predominantly white campuses, their colleagues may have the perceptions that affirmative action implies that UMF are less qualified than non-minority faculty (Carter and O'Brien 1993), and approaches to mentoring may not fit the resources, environment, needs, or constraints of either mentor or protégé (Healy and Welchert 1990; Stange and Hekelman 1990). Yet, mentoring and coaching for UMF, and all junior faculty, is a critical component of academic success (Stange and Hekelman 1990). This is particularly true in an environment such as academia, which has its own culture, expectations and tangible indicators of successful performance.

Of all newly hired faculty, 40-50% do not advance successfully (Moore and Johnson 1989). If UMF are experiencing similar or lower advancement success, we have reason to be alarmed about the lack of diversity and equality within the academic community and its future impact. Additionally, faculty are being called on to perform a variety of tasks which require them to use skills beyond those of their discipline specific training. Some of these tasks include facilitating small groups of learners in problem-based learning (PBL) curricula, building collaborative teams and providing leadership in a variety of venues.

How do these realities relate to broader theoretical and disciplinary perspectives and to the field of adult education? Faculty are adult learners and faculty developers are adult educators, many of whom are formally trained in adult education. The field of adult education is eclectic, and there is a need for greater cross communication between adult education generalists and adult educators who specialize in continuing professional education. Our purposes for this paper are to facilitate cross communication, broaden the adult education dialogue to include diverse voices and share information about an innovative faculty professional development and mentoring (FPDM) programme for UMF as a professional development response to changing professional environments focusing on faculty who might otherwise be marginalized. We will discuss strategies for nurturing FPDM in academic institutions. Because our reality is constructed from the practices of science and health professions education, we created our case around faculty within those disciplines. Although that is our framework, we believe we are sharing perspectives and perceptions that are transferable across the professional environments of academic institutions.

Adult education perspectives

Except for nursing education, adult education practices in health professional and science based education at the university level have appeared to be more the exception than the rule in the United States. Adult education philosophy has been absent from the curriculum design process primarily because those who have been responsible for curriculum design and revision usually have not been individuals trained in adult education principles. Science and health professions curricula traditionally have been rigidly structured, content focused and faculty driven and dominated. Curricular reform has been a slow process (Gunzburger 1993; Hendricson *et al* 1993) because academic departments have feared losing 'their time' in the curriculum to convey discipline specific content knowledge. One of the most fervently debated issues

in medical education curricular reform has been, and continues to be, altering the curricular time of an academic department. The attitude has been, 'Don't fix what isn't broken. Students need the content.'

Most faculty in the sciences and in health professions' schools are the products of traditional curriculum. Few have experienced an educational process that respected them as adult learners. Thus, they typically teach as they were taught and pattern themselves according to the role models they encountered. Fortunately, we have been experiencing a shift in the thinking of what is good educational practice in the sciences and health professions mainly because these disciplines have becoming increasingly influenced by the discipline of education. Faculty who are professionally trained as educators, many as adult educators, are becoming more visible in curricular reform decisions and are helping to change the focus away from content to one that is more process oriented and learner-centered. Science and health professions faculty are acknowledging that their learners are adults who are responsible for their own learning and that lectures are not the only strategy for efficient transfer of content.

Because of the information explosion and rate of change of scientific knowledge (the half-life of the body of knowledge and practice within most health professions and science-based disciplines is about five years), most faculty understand they cannot 'tell' learners everything they need to know to be competent practitioners during the period of time devoted to professional training. They have come to realize that foremost among their many purposes is to cultivate lifelong learners who have astute problem-solving acumen and the ability to continuously self-assess and self-direct their learning. Their raisons d'être, in addition to teaching content knowledge and practical skills and socializing neophytes into the professions, are to promote critical thinking and reflection, develop problem-solving skills and encourage self-direction in learning. That is, to create the consummate professional means to create the consummate learner. Therefore, the curriculum must be flexible enough to give learners opportunities to build and hone these type of skills during professional training if they are expected to function as autonomous practitioners after training.

One response to the challenge of making curriculum more flexible and adult learner-centered has been PBL. PBL is a group-oriented, group and self-directed learning process structured around a patient 'case' that is guided by faculty tutors who may not be content experts relevant to the case. Although PBL in medical education has been around for nearly 30 years, it is a newer educational strategy to come into play in the past 10-15 years in US medical education. PBL has become more popular in the 1990s with an increasing number of schools considering adopting it in various forms. About 30% of the medical schools in the US have initiated some form of PBL or other self-directed learning activities in the curriculum (Gunzburger 1993). As PBL is being slowly adopted in medicine, it is being adopted more quickly by other disciplines (that is dentistry, engineering, environmental health, nursing, occupational therapy, optometry, pharmacy, physical therapy, veterinary medicine). PBL has proven to be an effective method to use in science based education (Albanese 1993; Norman, and Schmidt 1992; Vernon and Blake 1993) and as a result has recently filtered into elementary and secondary science education programs (Gallagher *et al* 1995; Stepien and Gallagher 1993).

Although the aim of the paper is not to delve into the strengths or weaknesses of PBL or its rate of adoption, we present it as one example of the new tasks requiring skills beyond discipline specific training that faculty in science and health professions education may be asked to acquire. Those skills include facilitating small group process, attending to group dynamics, assisting students to identify learning issues, evaluating students' problem solving skills qualitatively and helping students to hone self-assessment and peer assessment skills.

FPDM programme

Most colleges sponsor formal or informal faculty development activities. Data collected at University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center (OUHSC) indicated that these programs are often discipline specific and are intended to supplement and complement assumed foundational skills in the clinical, education or research portfolio of the faculty member.

The FPDM program is not designed to supplant faculty development activities provided at participants' home institutions, nor is it designed to be a remediation programme. It is designed to complement existing faculty development activities and enhance the capacity of UMF to have effective professional relationships by encouraging them to engage in collegial dialogue centered on goal setting and counsel seeking, to develop interdisciplinary relationships as part of their professional and intellectual network, and to invest in team building and leadership skills that can enhance their personal comfort with seeking out and engaging in mentor-protégé relationships at their home institutions.

The FPDM program is a national offering within the existing OUHSC faculty leadership programme which began October, 1989. The programme faculty were guided by adult learning philosophy when designing the FPDM programme. The key objective

of the programme is to involve UMF in an eight-day structured, interdisciplinary and experiential programme that focuses on topics of education and instruction, scholarship and research and professional academic skills (communication and negotiation, administration, leadership and team building). Each topic provides participants with a set of foundational skills and assessment tools and methods to check their individual development.

The program is designed to assist participants to frame an individual faculty development plan (IFDP). The IFDP is patterned after the adult learning contract and includes goals, objectives, strategies for accomplishing objectives, evaluation criteria and time lines for accomplishments. The purpose of the IFDP is to diminish the degree of mystery often associated with faculty performance, evaluation and advancement. It is a tool for conducting a structured dialogue with the department leader about goals, expectations and specific outcomes - or outcome examples - desired by the faculty member and the department head. The IFDP can provide specific markers to identify areas for continuing self-assessment, professional growth and development and to note accomplishments at regular intervals.

Planning of career goals is an ongoing process, and should ideally take place within the context of a mentor relationship. The FPDM program assists participants in the development and implementation of personal strategies to engage in mentor-protégé relationships within their home college and through interprofessional relationships. The mentoring component of the FPDM programme provides participants with follow-up during the academic year post attendance. The follow-up includes dialogue with faculty mentors (from the FPDM programme) to discuss progress on the IFDP goals and objectives and follow-up with the participants' 'natural mentors' (department head or senior faculty member) to encourage initiation, maintenance or modification of the consultative process based on the participants' key performance objectives.

UMF are recruited from historically Black colleges and universities and US colleges of arts and sciences (medicine, allied health, dentistry, pharmacy, nursing, and public health). These fields are those for which the OUHSC have current and specific educational and scholarly expertise. Application materials are provided to college deans and university representatives at institutions of higher education.

Nurturing FPDM in academic institutions

The PEW Foundation for the health professions (O'Neil 1995) recently reported on the changes expected to impact health professional education. The health professional training setting is a particularly demanding environment for all faculty, particularly as health care reforms in the US move the health care setting toward more managed care and more accountability. Creative approaches to clinical teaching in these environments will clearly demand more attention. Evans (1995) notes that as academic institutions are increasingly pushed by external standards, the former 'gold standard' that rewarded faculty with advancement for their independent and single minded drive for productivity directed toward a tenure outcome, is no longer suitable. In this emerging environment junior UMF face extraordinary challenges along with their non-minority peers. Although in slow transition, general expectations for faculty advancement continue to include measures of success relevant to crafting a significant expertise and role in the teaching program, contributing to the development of new knowledge through research and scholarship, providing professional service in the discipline as a clinician or peer reviewer in the scientific area and mentoring the acquisition of discipline specific skills by students. Faculty are also expected to maintain their own proficiency through continued professional development, and to contribute to the university community at large through service on committees or in other delegated roles (such as administration).

As the environment for health professional education grows increasingly complex, through requirements from internal and external accrediting bodies, UMF face a paradox. Success in the traditional sense might require them to be self-focused and exceptionally task-oriented. This would reduce their availability to students outside of structured and formal contact, and would similarly diminish their availability for service activities. Without these role models, students have few avenues to see UMF as key participants in the educational domain, and the higher education environment loses the perspectives of these individuals in crafting initiatives that could make the environment more productive for UMF and their junior peers. The need for mentoring in these times is increasingly important in our view. Faculty caught in the transitional period will undoubtably hear mixed messages regarding the importance of where and how they use their time. Waxman (1992) suggests that we develop 'effective methods for mentoring junior faculty...and make available the most appropriate role models from the perspective of gender and minority status'. A structured faculty professional development and mentoring program can use the expertise of adult educators to engage UMF in functional learning that is generative in nature, encouraging the faculty member to gain skills suited to an evolving higher education environment.

Institutions of higher education need faculty who have both fluency and flexibility. Fluency contributes

directly to the faculty member's ability to meet the learner and engage in the learning process, without rigid adherence to a pro forma structure but with attention to student mastery of the information and continued investment in learning. Flexibility contributes to the capacity of an institution to call upon a cadre of individuals who have the requisite skills to be effective team members or leaders. The FPDM program provides junior faculty with an opportunity to build and hone their skills in communication to professional and lay audience members, articulate a personal research agenda and examine the skills needed to investigate both quantitatively and qualitatively based questions. Additionally, FPDM provides an avenue for junior faculty to acquire a clear understanding of the formal and informal organizational and leadership issues that confront the academic health professional and scientific community. These issues, including examining how universities will respond to the PEW report and the impact of those responses on the educational, clinical and research environments, can help faculty remain aware of the broader context which influences their work process and product. Without such an intervention, UMF and their peer faculty have little incentive to work through collaborative efforts or demonstrate leadership skills that help serve the mission of the institutions they serve.

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Can post-modern adults be educated?

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Introduction

The title of this conference 'Diversity and development: futures in the education of adults' suggests that the education of adults will continue in the future. Working in a university department of adult continuing education, one might take a gloomier view, for there seems to be a growing number of serious challenges to the very existence of adult continuing education as we have known it.

Some of the challenges arise through policy decisions on matters of accreditation, finance, quality, delivery and so on. Other challenges appear more abstract, but are nevertheless potentially just as destructive, and threaten to undermine the whole enterprise of higher education, not just adult continuing education. These arise from the intellectual movement known loosely as post-modernism.

We shall look more closely later at the content of post-modernism. Here we need note only that the movement raises serious questions for any activity concerned with the acquisition or transmission of knowledge, however defined. Current views of higher education, including adult education at this level, incorporate assumptions about the acquisition and transmission of knowledge. These views are therefore open to post-modernist criticism, and are made more vulnerable to that criticism by the lack of a philosophically grounded clarification and justification of the theory and practice of higher education and of adult continuing education in the university setting.

But the concern does not stop there. Students on adult education courses in the future will have grown up and received their initial education in a culture affected by post-modernist views. Those preparing and delivering courses will have to take this into account. At the same time, there is a strong suspicion that university adult education courses will soon be required to justify themselves in terms of the number of credits achieved by students. Quite properly, both the syllabus and the assessment for an accredited course require the approval of institutional as well as departmental colleagues, just like any other course carrying credit awarded by the university. However the processes of academic approval can place severe constraints on the ability of departments of adult continuing education to respond appropriately to their students, not least because colleagues in other departments do not always recognise the particular needs, interests and prior knowledge and experience of adult students. If those adult students have developed in a post-modern intellectual climate, the clash between their approach to education and that of many university colleagues will pose, I suggest, even greater problems for those involved in developing courses in adult continuing education.

This paper is concerned then with adult continuing education in the university and with post-modernism: that is, it is concerned with two sets of ideas which are very hard to pin down. In neither case is there a consensus in current literature about what these umbrella terms cover, which allows plenty of room for manoeuvre to advocates and critics alike. One could spend a whole session examining the different possibilities and combinations of definitions and their implications in the two areas. To avoid the temptations of conceptual trivial pursuit, I shall indicate what, for the purposes of this paper, I take to be the most significant ideas from the two areas of education and post-modernism. I shall then examine these strands in relation to each other, hoping that in so doing I am not simply setting up straw dummies.

Education

We begin with the idea of education. There has been much debate about the concept of education, and many definitions of education are available in the current literature. For our concern with education at the university level, a sufficient basis is provided by Ronald Barnett's discussion of the idea of higher education (Barnett 1990). Concluding his analysis, Barnett suggests six conditions which together would constitute processes of higher education. These include the understanding and critique of certain knowledge claims and the development in the student of 'the capacity critically to evaluate his or her own achievements, knowledge claims and performance' (Barnett 1990, 203).

In discussing knowledge Barnett is at pains to stress the complexity of knowledge claims. Nevertheless he wishes to make a distinction between bona fide knowledge and spurious knowledge. To do this he uses the ideas of objectivity and truth, claiming that ' higher education is founded on the beliefs that objectivity and truth are attainable' (Barnett 1990, 47). In Barnett's analysis, objectivity is retained but allied to a form of subjectivity through paying attention to students' personal responses to situations, while truth is seen as in part negotiable, developed through open and critical conversation which carries inbuilt ethical demands (Barnett 1990, 59).

This emphasis on student responses links with many definitions current in the field of adult education. Typical is that of Peter Jarvis (Jarvis 1995). He defines education as 'any planned series of incidents, having a humanistic basis, directed towards the

participants learning and understanding' (Jarvis 1995, 18). Learning is 'the process of transforming experience into knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, emotions, etc.' (Jarvis 1995, 22).

It is not appropriate here to discuss these analyses. What we need to notice is the underlying ideas of knowledge and of people. Knowledge is seen as at least in part objective, accessed by rational thought and subject to universal criteria of judgement. People, the participants in the educational process, are seen as self-reflective entities, capable of learning and understanding and transforming their own experience. These underlying ideas are challenged by post-modernist thought.

Post-modernism

Characterising post-modernism is difficult because the term is used very loosely and covers a wide variety of stances and ideas in a range of disciplines. However, for our present purposes, the most significant strands of post-modernist thought occur in philosophy and here we can discern some continuity across a variety of philosophical positions. Amongst the common strands of philosophical post-modernism, three in particular question the possibility of the kind of higher education of adults described above. These are the claims that human thinking is fragmented and locally determined, that knowledge cannot be objective and that the self is a construct mediated through discourse.

The first claim denies the possibility of any universally or timelessly valid categories or rules of thought. Instead, it is said, rational thought always takes place within a particular setting and so is always conditioned by time and place and culture. This applies to the rules of thought as much as to the content. Consequently our thinking is determined and circumscribed by the local conditions in which we find ourselves, and is necessarily fragmented because the conditions are constantly changing.

The second claim, that knowledge cannot be objective, denies all attempts to ground knowledge claims in some transcendent reality. All knowledge, it is said, is socially constructed and relative to a particular knower in a particular culture at a particular time. Hence there is no vantage point from which knowledge can be discussed disinterestedly, or to which the seeker after knowledge can be drawn. Instead, all prospective knowers must start from where they are, and get where they can by integrating within themselves the various discourses of which they are part.

The third claim relates the discourses of which we are part to ourselves. For post-modern thought there is no such thing as the essential self, an autonomous being which in some way precedes our experience. Instead we are constituted and mediated through taking part in a variety of formative processes, which together provide us with our sense of who and what we are at a given point in time.

If these brief summaries are accurate, then the effect of philosophical post-modernism is to deny precisely those ideas of knowledge and of people which undergird the views of higher education outlined earlier. In order to appreciate the implications of such a denial, we shall consider its effect on the course, the tutor and the student in university adult continuing education.

University adult education and post-modernism

In a post-modernist world, courses cannot offer knowledge within a discipline governed by universal rules of intellectual discourse, for there is no objective knowledge and there are no absolute rules of thought. If there is no objective knowledge, higher education as described by Barnett cannot take place. Even given his development in terms of conversation and truth by negotiation, there is still an assumption that in higher education there is something to be taught and some way of assessing what is taught in order to distinguish the spurious from the good. Any such assessment requires a standpoint outside the subject concerned. On a post-modern view, that is not possible.

Moreover, the post-modernist perspective attacks the division of subject matter by disciplines. There are no absolute or universal boundaries, and necessarily we constitute our own realms of discourse. Consequently, our cherished traditional specialisms become redundant. Of course, many tutors in adult education habitually and happily cross traditional academic disciplinary boundaries, but for higher education the total demise of subject disciplines is a problem, for both tutor and student.

Higher education assumes that teaching is done by specialists, usually engaged in research which means they are working at the leading edge of knowledge in their field. To be classified in this way puts the tutor in the position of one who knows something: indeed for many students in adult education, the reason for coming to a class in the first place is that they wish to hear about a particular topic from someone who knows something, who is an expert in the field. Granted that the best adult education practice expects the tutor to be a learner also and to engage with the students and draw on and incorporate their individual expertise, experience and knowledge into the group experience, it is still the case that someone has to draft the syllabus, direct the process and keep the discussion on track. According to post-modernism, there is no standpoint from which you can do that: the tutor is not only a learner, but a learner

with no greater pretensions to knowledge than the students.

And what of the students, engaged in their directed process of learning and understanding? They are being formed in post-modern fashion by the discourses of which they are part. They are not autonomous rational selves but creatures of process, involved in the continuous integration of new experiences. Can they ever achieve understanding? Apparently not, at least if understanding is taken to include some clear grasp of knowledge on which to build, for all knowledge and all understanding is relative, culturally conditioned and largely superficial!

Thus it seems that higher education as traditionally conceived, even in the modified form presented by Barnett, cannot take place in a post-modern world, and post-modern adults cannot be educated at university level in any traditional sense of education. There is nothing to teach, nobody able to teach the nothing and no one able to learn from the nobodies teaching nothing.

Educating post-modern adults

What is to be done then? Should all of us in university departments of adult continuing education pack up and steal quietly away even before the administration catches up with us? I am more hopeful than that, partly because in outlining the challenge of post-modernism we have already mentioned some of the things which point towards the continuation of continuing education.

In the post-modern world we have lost objective knowledge, but we have gained support for the idea of a community of knowledge in which all are ready to be open and to learn from each other. What is offered in a course will be explicitly a series of perspectives on information drawn from a variety of sources including the students' experience. The open syllabus shaped by the interests of tutor and students together, often claimed to be a feature of the best liberal adult education of the past, will become a necessary element. We shall need to develop a fresh understanding of the transferrable skills which presently unite academic disciplines, including the skills of analysis and critical reflection, but that too has been part of the adult education scene for some time. In all this, the experience and practice of adult education can serve as a model for colleagues used to a more restricted idea of syllabus and skill.

Then if we have lost the post-modern teacher we have gained fresh backing for the idea of the teacher as learner and the traditional extra-mural learning contract. Post-modern students must be taken seriously as adults, as people able to bring both experience and reflective ability to their studies, and the post-modern tutor must accept the limitations of personal expertise. This will require a change of attitude for many tutors and students, but offers the possibility of actually realising the ideals of the extra-mural tradition.

The post-modern student may not be an autonomous rational being, but will certainly be ready to develop a critical stance on everything. This may be uncomfortable at times, but it will be good for everyone. Further, while the icon of a completed, formed, integrated educational success has been destroyed in the post-modern world, we have gained a sense of openness and progress. Students will all know that they are on the way, always. On the way to what? To further experience, further development, further efforts at integration: we really are concerned with lifelong learning.

However, if all these positive developments in adult continuing education are to be accepted by university colleagues as proper higher education, we shall need to change the received view of higher education. Wilfred Carr has attempted to point the way to do this for education generally (Carr 1995) through the idea of emancipatory education. Using his terms, higher education will need to become not only emancipatory, but emanicipatory through the specific development of a critical consciousness.

So can post-modern adults be educated at university level? I believe that they can. It seems to me that the post-modern challenge as I have described it can be met effectively, if we are prepared to examine and amend the basis of our theory and practice.

One final word. I have not yet met any post-modern adults, and I do not expect to do so. Post-modernism seems to me to be an intellectual game, which in the end has no substance and which will pass away sooner rather than later. Nevertheless those who call themselves post-modernist raise important issues which should be addressed, in education as much as elsewhere. In criticising received ideas, post-modernism is offering us insights, some of which, I have suggested, will help to legitimate and extend practices which adult educators have recognised as good practice for a long time. A positive response to those insights will help not only the cause of adult education, but also the cause of higher education. So even if post-modern adults cannot be educated in the traditional sense, the adults of our present and future worlds can, and will, be educated.

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Should higher education for adults carry a health warning for their relationships?

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The requirement of successive governments to increase the number of students in higher education, allied to the declining numbers of school leavers, has resulted in a move away from the standard A level student to a wide diversification of entrants. Each 'category' of student within this diversification have brought with them a diversity of needs. The main beneficiaries of this diversification have been mature students.[1] This research project was initiated in an attempt to identify the needs that this increasingly important category of students bring with them into higher education.

It became apparent early in the research that mature students have needs that are associated with that maturity. More likely than standard students to be part of a long term relationship[2], it appears that those relationships may be harmed by participation in higher education. Undertaken with a group of 26 undergraduate mature students in their second year study, this research found that, of the 14 students in long term cohabiting relationships, 11 (79%) reported problems within those relationships caused, at least in part, by their entry to university. This problem is not restricted to live-in relationships; if those in relationships not involving cohabitation are included the numbers increase to 16 out of 19 (83%).

A literature review offered two possible, though not mutually exclusive, explanations for this phenomenon. These are personal development and growth (Kirk 1982; Smithers and Griffin 1986; University of Sheffield 1981) and the conflict caused within a relationship when the consequent re-negotiation of roles take place when one partner takes on the additional, and time consuming, role of student (Elsey 1982; Smithers and Griffin 1986; University of Sheffield 1981). This second explanation recognises that study is not undertaken in isolation from other aspects of life and that integrating the role of student into existing roles within a relationship requires adjustment from both the student and the partner. While this theory of role adjustment has been criticised (Edwards 1993) for neglecting the sexual politics involved in relationships (especially where the student is female), problems of re-adjustment do exist.

The adjustments required are not always achieved without conflict, nor are they always successful. Of the students involved in this study, three reported the break-up of established relationships (two of them non-cohabiting) due specifically to their entry to university. Both students in non-cohabiting relationships brought those relationships to an end prior to registration because they did not want the distraction or complication of a relationship to interfere with academic ambitions. Both spoke in terms of no longer having the time for relationships, as study had become the priority in their lives. This also represents a recognition on the part of these students that stress can be placed on relationships in this way. The third relationship came to an end after the student concerned was physically beaten by her cohabiting partner in an attempt to prevent registration.

The most commonly articulated problems came within this category of role adjustment. Of those in cohabiting relationships admitting to stress within the relationships, all described problems of this nature, with symptoms appearing more severe for female students. The problems revolve around the inability to devote the same amounts of time previously given to the role of wife or mother. These findings are supported by other studies, for example Elsey (1986) Smithers and Griffin (1986), University Of Sheffield (1981) and Crowcroft (1983). All provide similarly depressing evidence that significant numbers of students in cohabiting relationships, especially females, find it difficult to reconcile the new role of student with existing responsibilities within the family.

These problems of role adjustment are not restricted to cohabitation. Those in non-cohabiting relationships describe similar problems, again associated with the changed role of the student. The problems experienced in these relationships tend to be generated by the failure of the non-participating partner to come to terms with the inevitable changes in the pattern of the relationship brought about by study patterns determined by such things as essay deadlines, seminar preparation and examination revision.

As stated earlier, the reasons for such relationship problems are two-fold, and the problems associated with a role adjustment are often exacerbated by those associated with the personal development of the partner experiencing academic study. Hostler (1981) reports that personal growth does not occur in and of itself, but comes from some external factor, the most likely of which will be education in that education 'is a deliberate and conscious attempt at personal growth'. Hostler appears to be supported by this research as many of the students involved gave a wish for personal growth and development as the primary reason for re-entry into education.

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1 For the purpose of this paper the defining criteria for mature student status will be 21 years of age.

2 Relationships of more than one year.

Of the eleven students in cohabiting relationships reporting problems, five cite individual change and personal development as the prime reason. Sexual jealousy was also apparent, though respondents tended to gloss over this, as while it might be a problem for their partners, it was not an issue for them. The student experiencing the most serious problems admits to being frightened of this process of change and growth:

> I am frightened for the future, I think that my relationship will end. I am changing and I do not know where it will all end. I don't know if I want to continue be a wife and mother, all I know is I want to complete this course. It has become the most important thing in my life.

The University of Sheffield (1981) concluded that some students lead a 'schizoid existence' as they struggle to create sense out of what can be a traumatic time in their lives. One student in this group comes close to describing his experience in these terms:

> My relationship has certainly been affected by my time at university. I had been warned that I might have problems and have handled it by leading two different lives. When I am at home with the family I try to be the person I have always been, but when I am alone in my bedroom studying I can be who I like. I can be Marx, I can be Durkheim, Braverman, anyone I like.

Elsey (1982) describes this process as a 'traumatic struggle for independence' which is often resisted and only resolved when the student becomes selfish. Again, this view is supported by this research, with some students threatening to end relationships, some after many years of marriage, if the partner fails to accommodate the needs of the student. Typically:

> I gave him a choice, either I do the course and live with him, or I do the course and leave. Since then things have improved.

Caution should be taken here to prevent assumptions being made. It may well be that for those students entering higher education for affective, non instrumental reasons it might not be the exposure to higher education that is causing the problems with relationships. It may well be that the ambition to enter higher education is driven by, and symptomatic of, a previously troubled relationship.

Discussion points

If we accept, as I think we must, that mature students bring with them a diversity of needs, then the universities must attempt to furnish a diversity of policies to meet those needs. In recognition of the difficulties involved in developing such solutions I offer a number of discussion points in the hope of generating a wider debate on the specific issue raised in this research.

Point one

Elsey (1982) believes that some problems experienced by mature students are 'beyond the immediate concern of the individual university'. This is a shortsighted and mistaken view. While it could be argued that some problems may be unresolvable by individual universities, every effort should be made to minimise their effects . Universities genuinely concerned to increase access for mature students must attempt to alleviate these problems.

Primarily, if anything is to be achieved, universities must recognise and acknowledge that such problems do exist. These problems are far too disruptive to the lives of many students to be simply dismissed as part of 'life's dilemmas'. Once recognition and acknowledgment has been achieved then solutions can begin to be developed.

Point two

The levels of conflict caused by role adjustment appear to be related to the level of understanding the partner has of what is required of the student, and the pressures that student life can bring. Those relationships with the non-participating partner having either experience or knowledge of what higher education entails tend to exhibit less conflict, again a fact that is borne out by the literature (Elsey 1982; Hore and West 1980). This may also be true of the problems caused by personal development and growth.

One thing that has appeared to help those who are, at best, ambivalent about their partners re-entering education, has been their inclusion in some of the social activities associated with the university experience. Many students report a reduction in the strain on their relationship after their partners had attended social activities at the university. This also appears to have a collective benefit as non-participating partners are able to meet and '... sit together and have a good old moan about us. It seems to help them cope'.

Universities may be able to build on this. If an informal introduction to university life helps non-participants then perhaps a more formal system can be developed. All universities run some form of induction process for new students. It should not be too difficult to arrange a parallel process for partners where they can be introduced to the requirements university study places on students.

I also believe all mature students should be informed that such problems may occur. To be forewarned is to be forearmed. This is a point that the University of Durham has recognised. For the past two years this university has held a two day 'Mature

Students Conference' at which general discussions take place with new students, designed to ease their way into higher education. An important part of this process involves making students aware of the possible, and perhaps even probable, problems they may encounter in their relationships. New mature students are encouraged to inform personal tutors/counselling staff as soon as they occur in order that the university can respond. It seems that the University of Durham believes that, if the students are made aware that these and other such problems can be encountered, then the eventual outcomes may not be so serious.

Point three

Mature students themselves should be encouraged to participate in any debate on these issues, with the ideal vehicle being the Mature Students Society. However, if the mature Students Society is to be considered for this role, serious cultural and organisational changes would have to be made. The views held by most of the students in this research can be summed up by the following statements - 'What mature students society'? and 'It's great if all you're wanting to organise is a 'piss up'. The University of Sheffield (1981) believes that a Mature Students Society could represent a reservoir of knowledge on the circumstances of mature students, freely available to the institution concerned. Given organisational and financial support, the Society could become the voice articulating the needs of mature students, and prove to be the vehicle for mitigating many of the circumstances outlined above. The mechanisms to achieve this might, and perhaps should, include formal contact with institutional staff, up to and including, vice-chancellors.

Point four

Consideration should be given to the suggestion of Smithers and Griffin (1986) who recommend the appointment of a Faculty Mature Students Tutor. This person would be conversant with, and sympathetic to, the particular problems experienced by mature students. He or she could offer advice, where applicable, and 'signpost' other sources of advice and help, and act, where necessary, as a liaison with other tutors. A similar system has been newly adopted by the St. Cuthbert's Society of the University of Durham. There, specialist tutors have been designated to advise in areas such as international students, mature students, money management, etc. Through time these tutors will be able to build up experience in their given area which should enable them to provide better support and guidance than would be available in the normal tutor/tutee relationship. The important point here is to recognise that these tutors must be 'specialists' and that resources must be given over for training. Too often the burden falls on sympathetic but untrained tutors.

Point five

Many of the problems that fall under the description of role adjustment involve child care. Partial solutions to such problems come in the areas of crèche facilities and timetabling.

Crèche facilities at many universities are expensive to the point of being exclusionary to many student parents. Simply stating that financial constraints do not allow accessible crèche facilities for those in need is not an acceptable answer if institutions are to be seen as credible in offering greater access to mature students.

Details of timetables are, without doubt the most requested information from mature students in the weeks leading up to the new academic year. This demand for information is invariably due to students wishing to assess child care problems. Yet many do not receive timetables until a few days before the start of term. There is no institutional need to process timetables at the beginning of the academic year, immediately prior to the students' return. This process could take place at the end of the previous academic year and students informed with enough time to make any arrangements they may have to make.

Notwithstanding the increased demand on teaching facilities it should not be too difficult to ensure that, wherever possible, courses with substantial numbers of mature students are kept out of the pressure times of 9-10 am and 3-4 pm. As Lawler and Hore (1980) conclude:

> Attention given to time-tabling would constitute a recognition of mature students contribution to the institution. Difficult as this would be it would show that the institution was concerned with their welfare. (156)

Point six

The main source of help, at present available to mature students, are the counselling services offered by universities to all students. The students in this research were unwilling to use this service, either because the problems were too personal in nature or they wished as adults to seek their own solutions. I have no comment to make on this point other than if these are general views held by many mature student then counselling, as it now exists, is not a solution to their particular problems, and others must, consequently, be sought.

Conclusion

The main conclusion to be drawn from this research is that, whatever solutions are developed to address these problems, they must be fully resourced if

universities are to meet the demands of a ever more diverse student population.

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